



THE CRYSTAL ROOD

BY
MRS. HOWARD GOULD





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THE CRYSTAL ROOD



"MY LIFE BELONGS TO MY BROTHER"

See page 155

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THE
CRYSTAL ROOD

BY MRS. HOWARD GOULD ✓

✓ WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
EARL STETSON CRAWFORD ✓

Gould, Viola Katharine (Clemmons) "Mrs. Howard Gould"

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TO
THE MEMORY
OF
MY MOTHER

FOREWORD

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the teeth of the children are set on edge."

So ran a proverb of ancient Israel. The literature of the world impresses upon us the everlasting truth—"The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children." Little attention is paid to the converse of the proposition. Virtue and vice are alike transmissible. Oak trees beget oak trees, and mulberry bushes, mulberry bushes. Forces of good and evil so act and re-act that sometimes in one generation evil characteristics are dominant, and in a succeeding generation the ancient traits of virtue re-assert themselves. "Dominants sometimes become recessives, and recessives give way to dominants." It is conceivable that there might be in man a virtue as strong and buoyant, as unconquerable and unsubmersible, as the physical characteristics of his race, like them remaining insistently dominant through all the ages.

Blood will tell.

KATHERINE CLEMMONS GOULD

BOONSBORO, VIRGINIA,
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BOOK I

PROLOGUE

BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE

Malek-el-Adel, the Sultan, whom the Moslems called "the Light of the Faith," having bound himself by the beard of the Prophet, and Baldwin, Jerusalem's king, by the cross on his sword, that neither would do violence to the other, his property, or the peace of his dominions, for one year and one day, Baldwin and seven of his nobles rode down to Acre, whence they took ship for Italy. Disembarking at Salerno, they procured horses and proceeded to Rome. The Pope received them in the Lateran, descending one step on the dais as the flower of the chivalry of Christendom advanced from among his knights and sank on one knee, his plumed casque bent low.

"Arise, my son," said the Pontiff in the rich and resonant voice before which so proud and bold a spirit as Barbarrosa was to tremble at a later day. The frail waxen hand that had rested on the arm of the chair described the sign of the cross. "May the blessing of our Savior rest on

thee and thine. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost!"

Baldwin straightened the bent knee and faced the Pope. They were indeed contrasted types, these two men. Alexander of Siena was in the second year of his wonderful pontificate. There was little in his aspect to indicate the unflinching soul and bold purpose that were to carry him through nineteen years of bitter conflict and high achievement and bend the most daring and powerful of worldly princes to his inflexible will. In the pure white of his pontifical raiment he seemed frail and delicate as a snow crystal. His pale, even brow and the tracery of his features were like a filmy lace of exquisite design veiling an inward light.

It was plain that the churchman looked upon the steel-clad figure standing at the foot of his throne with more than a little interest and pleasure. Well it merited close attention. Baldwin was then in his thirty-second year, and Europe had been ringing with his fame since the second crusade when he, a stripling of sixteen, rode in the battle line with Conrad of Germany and Louis of France. Although his steel harness concealed the lines of his frame, it could not hide the splendid vigor of the still youthful veteran. Arab suns had burned to a nut brown that portion of

his face visible under his raised visor, but the quick-gleaming eyes were the old Norse blue, and an auburn curl matted on his brow suggested as well the Northern origin of his race. He was garbed as beseemed his rank and reputation. His visor was rich in gold inlay as was his gorget, and flashing jewels were crusted thick on the hilt of the great two-handled blade that was belted to his waist and trailed out behind his golden spurs.

"Lance of Christ, thou hast done well," said Alexander, resting his hand again upon the arm of his chair. "What tidings do you bring me from the frontier? Is it well with the Holy Land?"

"We hold our own," the soldier answered grimly. "Our red cross still flies above Jerusalem and men yet give to me the title with which they mocked our Lord, the Redeemer."

Alexander's eyes were shadowed. "Less the swords of the infidels than the greed and vanity of Christian princes have beset you," he said, as he descended the steps and laid a friendly hand on the king's shoulder. "But the ways of God are wonderful," he added, his face brightening. "While the dastards waste their blood and their souls in selfish and brutal conflict among themselves, Godfrey's successor surpasses Godfrey's deeds."

"Nay, burden me not with over-praise, Holy

Father," protested Baldwin. "The King of Jerusalem is gallantly served. Baldwin is proud less of his own prowess than of the good swords that strike with him for the cross."

"These gentlemen——?" The Pontiff's glance swept over Baldwin's shoulder to the seven knights clustered a few feet behind him.

"Aye, they are of the bravest, Holy Father," the king replied.

"And who is bravest of all?" Pope Alexander asked, his eyes smiling.

King Baldwin's huge laugh rang out with sudden clamor strange in that cloistered hall, and the clerics in their black robes gazed up from their parchments, startled as if some rude soldier had struck with the flat of his blade the golden altar bell. "Ho, gentles!" cried the monarch. "Answer his Holiness for me! Who is the bravest knight in all the world?"

"Philip of Exeter!" came the instant chorus from half a dozen throats as six ringing blades leaped from their scabbards and met point to point above the helmet of the seventh knight of the party whose hands rose and fell in a sweeping gesture of protest and deprecation.

"Holy Father, see'st thou how it stands," laughed the king. "Save his own, there is no dissent. Philip—our Philip—is bravest of all."

With a glance in which sudden surprise gave way to keen interest the Pope swept the protesting soldier. There was little to be seen of his face in the mailed hood he wore, and the Pope could gather only from the bulk of the suit of armor that it encased a stalwart frame. As the Pope advanced toward him, his hand upraised in benediction, all seven of the knights bent the knee, and Philip's bowed face became altogether hidden. Alexander turned again to the monarch.

"We would hear more of this Philip," he said. "Meanwhile may we tempt thee to share with us the meagre evening repast of a poor priest. Our chamberlain will see to it that your brave lances suffer no hunger, indeed they shall gain rather than lose in that they dine not with the Pope. There are matters of grave moment to be discussed between us, King of Jerusalem."

In the plain closet of the Pope, with the great white crucifix for its only wall ornament, Alexander and Baldwin sat for hours discussing plans for the future security of the Christian kingdom in the Holy Land. And at last the Pope said:

"This knight you call the bravest—what has he done that he should wear so proud a title?"

King Baldwin's eyes warmed with affection and he answered eagerly:

"'Tis a tale we of Palestine love to tell, Holy

Father. If you can spare the hours from rest——?”

The Pope nodded. “With a good heart,” he said.

The king raised his golden goblet.

“Here,” he cried, “I pledge sweet and eternal rest to Jocelyn de Courtenay. True and unfor-sworn was he and he died a good man’s death.” He drained the goblet.

“Jocelyn de Courtenay’s daughter,” he resumed, after a pause, “was the little maiden Isabelle, who came to our court at Jerusalem at the age of ten. Sweet bud was she then and sweetly she budded, until her seventeenth year found her in all her beauty and my knights dubbed her the rose of Syria. Many a lover, brave and gentle, sued her, but her bright spirit inclined to none, and not the most gallant might wear her favor as he rode in the lists of courtesy or the red field of battle. Yet there were two among my lances who seemed a little favored above the rest. Raoul de Chantillon, a brave boy upon whose bright spirit may our Lord have mercy, was one of these, and Philip of Exeter was the other. Between these two the contest seemed hardly fair, for Raoul was as bold in the bower as upon the field and Philip was ever the same as you have beheld this day, shy as a child under beauty’s glances

and more afraid of a fresh-lipped girl than of Noureddin and all his armed array. Yet, among us men, was he the better loved perhaps, for the vows of his knighthood were ever sacred in his eyes and he has a gentle way and a lion's courage. Wherever Cross and Crescent have clashed and our warcry, 'Dieu li volt!' hath risen with the Infidel's 'Allah hu!' these last six years, Philip's sword hath carved Philip's fame in the hearts of the Moslem host. Deadly must be his onset whom Noureddin's hosts have named the crimson pestilence."

The Pope nodded.

"Philip, who fought like a fire blast, loved timidly like a wood-maiden. If he and Raoul were with Isabelle in the hall Raoul would be on his knees beside the maiden's spinnet, but Philip stood afar and looked his love, speaking it not.

"The Easter will mark the second year since some business with the Sheik Beschara, grown too bold for Noureddin's legiance and too insolent for my dignity, brought us riding all to the wilderness east of Ascalon. In making my dispositions I left Raoul in command at Jerusalem. It was poor judgment in me; the lad was too hot, too quick, too brave, too much in love. Scarce had we vanished from the sight of the city than my lady Isabelle began to play with that warm high

heart. What caprice it was, what sudden longing for adventure, suited well enough to the spirit but ill to the sex of Jocelyn's daughter, I do not know, but the pretty eyes brightened and the pretty lips pouted and we were all for Tyre, all to ride the road and greet our cousin Imogene, safe-castelled there, against the glad day of our Lord's arising. Raoul denied, protested, shook his head, looked in her eyes—ah well, your Holiness wears a white shield against the shafts that fly from eyes such as Isabelle's; Raoul wore no such shield. Guy de St. Treve was left in command of the garrison, and with twenty horsemen they sallied forth.

“Two days to the north they were, faring easily on, when ill-fortune whelmed them over. Ben Ali and his brothers, three hundred strong, fell upon them. Peter the bow-legged, a tough old hammer-swinging of my guard, alone escaped that dire mêlée. Raoul died—peace be his guerdon and blessed his memory—and with him nineteen stout men at arms upon whom God have mercy, sank lifeless under that whirl-blast of desert spears. So paid he for his folly, poor lad. It was long afterward that Peter, who had been left for dead with his comrades, made his way back to us, and from him we heard a tale of valor

that makes a soldier's blood leap—they died like men, your Holiness."

"And the maiden?"

"Spared with her serving-woman for Ben Ali's tent. Such black news for Philip of Exeter when, a day in our advance, he returned to the city where he dreamed his love lay safe, and lovely. Nor long he stayed with that fresh dagger of pain in his great heart. Two chargers he took, lest the weight of one rider might tire a single steed, and in the darkling eve he shot out from the Damascus gate, while frightened men and women marvelled at the swiftness of his flight until he vanished and left on the quiet air the fading echoes of the high thunder of hoof-beats.

"The Sultan Malek is a mighty lord and lives in high estate. Fair is his city seat, Damascus, and well-walled, but it was a day of truce between us and but three Mamelukes stood guard at the open gate. Well might they shriek 'Sathani!' and raise their shields when they saw a dread apparition hurling out of the night. Thrice the sword of white flame rose and fell, and thrice the death shriek rang, and Philip thundered on. Straight as a clothyard shaft he flew until the wide gate of Nouredin's palace received him in its flood of light, for the Sultan feasted with his nobles. Now he sprang from his steed, and

strode on, his blade swinging like a flail beneath which fell the massed guard. Over the heads of the guards Malek saw the lightning flash of the great sword, as he sat in his hall, and he leaped to his feet with a cry.

“‘How many?’ demanded he, his scimitar bare in his hand and his nostrils wide, for he too is a warrior.

“‘But one,’ they answered him.

“‘Then, in the name of the Prophet, give way!’ he commanded. ‘Will ye shame me in the eyes of an unbeliever?’

“The press parted and Philip strode to the dais.

“‘Sultan,’ he said, ‘I am Philip of Exeter, knight of the cross.’

“‘Ha!’ exclaimed the Sultan, ‘you knock at my door with more vigor than courtesy, but with your blade in your hand you are welcome.’

“‘The maiden, Sultan!’ demanded Philip, with no waste of word. ‘Surrender her to me, and if her eyes meet not mine when we are face to face, though I cut a path through ten thousand to thy heart, thou diest the death.’

“‘Maiden?’ cried Nouredin, in amazement. ‘What maiden, madman?’

“Like a flame Philip’s glance shot out from beneath his lowered visor and searched the Sul-

tan's soul. What it found there was truth. There was no guilt in that high turbaned face. Philip's sword fell and he bent his crest.

“‘Listen, Emir,’ he said, ‘and mark well, for my words must be brief. I have come with the shedding of blood and done discourtesy to you in your hall. This was my need: the maiden Isabelle, whom I love, was taken on the road by Moslem spears, and they told me the riders who carried her off were thine. I know now thou knowest naught of this; but find the lady I must, and with speed ere harm come to her. Now listen to the plea of a knight who has hitherto begged of no man, save only the Lord Jesus, who is God—nay frown not, so I believe and in good time shall offer my body in proof, to thee, or any other Moslem. But now I pray thee let me go hence on my quest. On the white honor of a knight, and by the cross I now kiss, I pledge thee that, save in this adventure which I must pursue, I shall hold myself prisoner of thine, and submit to thy will for the discourtesy I have presently done. At whatever time I shall have rescued the maid and cut the foul heart from her abductor I shall come to thee and hold out my hand for thy gyves. How speakest thou, Sultan?’

“Ah, your Holiness, our Lord lost a gallant

soldier when the generous spirit of Nouredin got misplaced in a Moslem body.

“ ‘Not alone shall you ride, spirit of fire,’ he cried, ‘but brother in arms to you in this affair shall Malek be. This is Ben Ali’s deed and though we scour the desert we shall take his head for it. Ho, there, my steed and mail! And see to it, Sidi Ibrihim, that a thousand horsemen are ready for the road within the hour. Sons of the desert, fleet as fire, we need for the work, so take you the Sheik Melchior’s squadron.’

“His lieutenant fled the hall to execute his command and the Sultan laid his hand on Philip’s shoulder.

“ ‘Knight,’ he said, ‘I have many a spear and they lack not daring but I envy Jerusalem’s king the clear high heart that shrinks not from levelling his lone lance against the guarded master of a hundred thousand swords. Now when did this befall?’

“ ‘But three days since, as well as I could learn.’

“ ‘Then we may yet be in time. Ben Ali will for his desert waste beyond Palmyra’s walls. There he fears no Christian pursuit and will travel at leisure. An Arab son of a swine is he who has troubled me too long. Lay aside your heavy armor, knight, our need is speed when we hunt Ben Ali.’

"Philip stripped off his iron and joined Noureddin's gathering Arabs clothed in leather. A true son of the wind was the mount Malek provided, and the hour had not gone ere they were off, sweeping out like a wild snowstorm of the north in the white turbans and long white mantles these fleet riders wear. They overtook the robber sheik in the desert, and as was meet, Philip cleft his bearded head from his shoulders. Thanks to the Mother of Saints, the maiden had escaped harm—she and her serving-woman were rescued scatheless! Noureddin and his hosts escorted them toward our towers; we met them on the road. Then, among us all, Malek told me the story of the disturber of his feast, just as I have told it to your Holiness. Is he not brave, Successor of Peter?"

It took the fierce storms of after years to prove how high a spirit glowed in Alexander's delicate frame, but an earnest of it might be seen then in his gleaming eyes as he sprang to his feet.

"Let us seek him!" he cried.

Together they strode into the banquet hall where the knights sat feasting. They had doffed hauberk and casque, and the Pope might now see what manner of man was this Philip of Exeter. With his companions he had risen to his feet as the King and the Pope entered. A straight, proud

body he had, and a face befitting. Level was his brow, frank his brown eyes, and silken the brown curls that clustered thick on his poll. The high bridged nose, the clean mouth, the firm chin, all proclaimed the spirit within.

“Listen, dear son!” said the Pope as he paused before him and the young soldier sank on his knees. “It pleases Almighty God in his infinite wisdom to fill the veins of some of his creatures with blood of exceeding virtue, so that they are like unto golden chalices filled with priceless wine. When once he opens so pure a fount from the celestial river of life, it flows on for all time, manifesting itself in high deeds, in noble thoughts, in fruits of the spirit that bless this poor race of man. In thee, we who are of God’s Holy Church the present unworthy head on earth, recognize such a vessel of grace. Thou art a channel of the holy stream. So guard it from pollution while yet it is in thy trust that it may flow unsullied through thy race. Ever it will work its miraculous power in the same manner, nourishing noble thoughts, a well-spring of generous deeds. Though the generations be countless, still will it show its virtue, still will it bear fruit worthy of its divine author. Bequeath it to thy son. And to the eldest thereof, bequeath also this as a sign and a token, so that it may descend ever to the eldest son of thy

house and mark the flow of the pure and beneficent stream."

Alexander, as he spoke, took from the bosom of his gown a silken cord at the end of which hung a gleaming crystal cut in the form of the cross, and he threw the looped cord over the bowed head. Like the rich peal of an organ his voice rang out:

"Upon thee be the blessing of our Father, the Almighty God, and His Son, the gentle and brave Christ, our Savior, and the Holy Ghost, who commissioned us through the Sainted Peter; upon thee, bravest of the brave and thy son and thy son's son, forever!"

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

THE DEAD BRANCH

Rising and falling, fitful, uncertain, the wood-fire burned before the tepee of Pontiac. A log crackled and a red flame danced high, its sudden flare of angry light bringing out of the darkness things strange and vague—the forest branches bending down, the open flap of the tent, and the two figures, seated cross-legged, one at each side of the fire. The flame danced its wild life out and fell and the forms of branch and gnarled trunk vanished back into the shadow, the red ember glow showing only the two seated figures. One of them rose, glided into the deep gloom, and reappeared with an armful of fagots which were thrown on the red brands. Again the flames leaped up and the figure crouched down. It was the figure of an Indian woman.

The second form was motionless as a stone. The blaze when brightest showed a high, hooked nose and a towering brow whose lofty effect was heightened by the shaven crown and the single

scalp lock holding the eagle feather of a chief. Beneath the brow gleamed bold, coal-black eyes. In the teeth of this stony man was the stem of a pipe and from his lips the smoke clouds came in slow, regular puffs.

"Ugh!" grunted the chief at last. The glance of his crouching squaw was lifted for a second to his face, but it sank instantly to the ground.

"There is a rocky hill that juts out into the big water, back there," he said in a slow, keen voice that cut the gloom like a lash. "It rises, mighty, facing the gale and not afraid, and then—it ends. There is no more of it. It should be called Pontiac."

The woman stirred uneasily in her blanket.

For a long minute the chief smoked silently. Then he spoke again.

"Pontiac is a mighty war-chief. He is the king of the Ottawawas. His belt holds many scalps. His tent holds no sons."

Although the night was warm the woman shivered.

"Pontiac" in the voice was cold as ice and sharp as a razor edge—"Pontiac is a son of many chiefs, and has no son. He owns many fertile fields, but a barren squaw. He has a great name, but it must die with Pontiac. Pontiac is the father of six tribes, and of no son."

The woman's body bent forward until her face touched the ground. The chief slowly rose, standing above the fire with his red blanket wrapped close round his towering form. He did not look at the crumpled squaw at his moccasined feet but out into the gloom.

"Tomorrow with my young men I go on the hunt," he said. "The rising sun will see us on the trail. The women shall take the canoes and go back up the Mohawk into the country of the Delawares and shall wait the return of the hunting braves at the West end of Cayuga water, where the village of the Delawares shall shelter them."

He turned on his heel and strode into the tent. The squaw did not stir, but lay face down, while the red of the embers dulled and faded under the gathering ash. The night hours swept over her bowed head like the rushing, silent garments of the angel of death, and she stirred not. The edge of the coming day, pale gray, cold green, and faint far blue shot with pearl and crimson and gold, pushed up over the east and the camp stirred with life, but the squaw of Pontiac lay as might lie one whom the night spirit had touched in passing and left forever lifeless. Only when there was a stirring within her own tent did she shudder and lift her tired body. Quietly

then she stood up and gathered fagots and ignited them. The other fires of the encampment were already crackling and the odor of cooking venison became noticeable on the morning air. Outanie listlessly hung her strips of deer meat from the forked sticks above the blaze she had kindled, and when the meat was broiled she placed it on a piece of bark and raked from the embers a few potatoes which she had roasted meanwhile. These, with a horn of water from the nearby stream, constituted the chief's breakfast which he ate hurriedly and without a word to the slave who had prepared it. She watched him stand up when he had refreshed himself, and take his long rifle from the ground upon which he had laid it. The other braves were gathering and he stalked into the midst of them. Other squaws clustered around, chattering and gesticulating, but Outanie stood beside her dying fire, watching from afar. At last the ring of women folk broke and the braves fell into line behind Pontiac, who glided silently into the forest. Within a minute they had all vanished and the women and children were left alone. There was a sudden rush for the chief's tepee and a hundred questions were showered upon the squaw of Pontiac.

"Where go we, Outanie?" they asked. "When come they back? Where is the meeting place?"

"You are to go westward," answered Outanie, "until you come to the village of the Delawares by the side of Cayuga water. There will the hunters come when the hunting is over."

"And you? You, Outanie Dead-Branch?"

Outanie answered quietly:

"I go elsewhere on business of my lord. A few suns only shall I tarry, and then I shall join you at the village of the Delawares."

They turned from her for the work of dismantling the little camp and packing the long canoes. The tent poles came down, the raw-hide shelters were wrapped round them, and they were carried to the shore and stowed away in the bottom of the birchwood barks. Soon the whole party was embarked and the paddles began to beat the wide stream against whose flow the rude flotilla made head. Outanie watched the gleaming blades as they dipped in the water or flashed in the sun—watched until the last of the canoes was lost in the distance and she was alone by the bank. There was a bitter smile on her full and sharply curved lips. Although no longer youthful, her figure was slender and strong and there was a prideful lift to the brow and quiver to the nostrils that showed the true beat of the blood of warriors flowing in her veins. She broke her stony pose at last and with quick skilful fin-

gers dismantled her tent, and stowed it in her canoe. Before she stepped into the boat she faced the west, standing very still, her long shadow flung out before her by the slant of the morning sunbeams. Slowly and with eyes still fixed on the misty blue of the ribbon of sky that dipped down between the green wood banks to kiss the shining water, she stepped into the bark. Her hand reached for the paddle, and with a dexterous swing of the blade she shot her frail vessel out into the full downward flow of the stream. Then she rested, the paddle idle in her hand, while the Mohawk's flow carried her east and south and ever farther and farther from the lands of her own people.

Three days Outanie journeyed on the breast of the stream. Her rifle found her food among the banks, her fish-line too was put to use, for the squaw of Pontiac knew the ways of wood and stream. On the second day of her journey a canoe fleet of Mequas intercepted her boat, and their chief questioned her.

"Where do you go, squaw?" he demanded.

Outanie swept her hand toward the east.

"With the river," she said.

The chief scowled.

"What is your name and nation, woman?" he said sternly.

"Outanie Dead-Branch, a daughter of the Ottawawas."

"Where are your people?"

"Hunting."

"Ugh! But where?"

"How should I know who am not with them."

"You talk high like a warrior, woman," reprimanded the Mequa, a note of anger in his throat.

During the colloquy Outanie had regarded him with a stony face. There were sullen fires in her eyes. She did not deign to reply to his rebuke.

"Come," he said. "What if we take you to be a squaw to one of our braves?"

Her dull burning eyes turned from the speaker to his companions whom she examined one by one with deep scorn.

"I have been squaw to a great chief," she said. "Would you wife me to a woman?"

The Mequa's sinewy arm was uplifted and the tomahawk flashed above Outanie's head. For the first time she smiled, looking up at her doom like a pleased child. But before the weapon could fall its sweep was arrested and the wrist of its possessor held in a restraining grip. A wrinkled and hideously painted Indian who had watched intently the face of the squaw had shot out his hand to stay the deadly hatchet.

"Nay," he said. "Do you not see that she is

mad? She is one of Manitu's witless ones and may not be slain. I have spoken."

He released the young chief's wrist and gathered his blanket round him. The chief slowly let his war-hatchet fall to his side. Then without another word he picked up his paddle and drove his canoe up the river. Silently the others followed his example. The look of joy faded out of Outanie's face, leaving only the bitter smile on her lips. She continued to float down with the tide.

At the close of the third day's voyage, as the ripples of the river were dancing red and gold under the westering sun, the Ottawawa woman paddled her boat in close to the river bank, and gazed with surprise at the scene which greeted her eyes. The forest had been cleared for several acres and buildings far more substantial than any she had ever seen had been erected in the clearing. A palisade of logs five feet in height surrounded these structures. Her own people were not unaccustomed to the erection of stockades for the protection of their villages and Outanie rightly conjectured that this was a fort, but she marvelled at the size and strength of these homes. Then the truth dawned upon her. This must be a fort of the strange people of whom she had heard far back in the wilderness but had never

seen. This must be a pale-face settlement. She hauled her canoe out of the water and hid it among the bushes that grew plentifully on the bank. With a steady step she approached the gate in the palisade. Three young men stood at the gate. They were strangely clothed to the eyes of Outanie, and they spoke to her words which had no meaning in her ears. She guessed, however, that they asked who she was and whence she had come, so she pointed to the west and uttered the name of her tribe, "Ottawawa."

"What says the woman, John? You speak their gibberish?" said one of the white men, addressing another who stood leaning against the wall.

"She is an Ottawawa," the man answered. "Woman," he asked in the tongue of the Delawares, "why are you so far from the lands of the Ottawawas? What does the woman of the Ottawawas want among the pale-faces?"

"I am Outanie Dead-Branch," the squaw answered. "I am squaw of a chief, but have borne him no son. Therefore am I shamed among my own people, and I would dwell afar. I would dwell among the white people so that my lord may not see me more."

The woodsman translated to his companions. "It is a way they have," he said with a shrug. "The poor wretch is an outcast. I would let

her stay, master burgomaster. She is strong and may serve you as interpreter, and she will cost the settlement nothing, for these Indian women know how to find their own food."

Thus Outanie became attached to the settlement. As the hunter had declared, she was not a drain upon the frontier log camp, and she soon picked up enough English to make her useful as an interpreter.

The forty families composing the little white community were, for the most part, Dutch, although there were among them some few Englishmen and Frenchmen. These latter were the scouts and hunters; the Dutchmen and their families traded with the Indians and cultivated the cleared fields.

Summer went swiftly from the land. The forest put on its autumn finery of russet and scarlet and gold. The winter came with sudden gusts of snow-laden gales and the fires smoked under many chimneys. By this time Outanie had become a familiar in the post. She proved apt in learning the household ways of her white hosts. And never suffered for lack of substantial shelter during the winter months. In the business affairs of the settlement, as well as in its household matters, she bore a useful part. When the snow lay deep on the floor of the forest and the ice thick and

hard upon the surface of the water, the burgo-master of Amsterdam found this hardy, forest-bred woman a swift and reliable messenger who could track miles over the snow upon her snowshoes, and carry correspondence between Amsterdam and neighboring posts.

Reluctantly, the winter withdrew at last into its northern fastnesses, taking its shackles of ice off the rushing waters of the Mohawk. Once more the farmers went out to plow the fields and the hunting parties who had wintered at Amsterdam prepared for their spring excursion into the wild. From one of these hunters Outanie received a trust on the eve of his departure.

"Outanie," he said, "this, my wife, shall bear me a babe. Be you at her side and nurse her and the child against my return. Then I shall give you beads and wampum."

The Indian woman's eyes brightened for an instant, but there was no sign of deepened interest on her impassive features, nor was there a change in the low note of her voice as she answered:

"They shall not hunger if Outanie can find food. They shall not die if Outanie can keep them alive. Warrior and hunter may go and fear not; Outanie will care for white squaw."

The woodsman smiled with satisfaction. He was less troubled in mind, faring forth into the

forest, now that he knew this silent and competent woman would take his place at his wife's side.

The May floods were roaring through the Mohawk's channels when a new soul came to Amsterdam. It was bought with its equivalent. Despite the skilful ministrations of Outanie, the wife of the hunter died on the night of her baby's birth. The Indian woman bending over her saw the features that had been twisted in pain relax to that semblance of the peace that passeth all understanding. Quickly she put her brown hand on the white breast. Nothing fluttered beneath it. Swiftly she bent and laid her brown cheek against the red lips. No breath moistened the cheek. Then she stood upright and, for a long time, motionless as the dead woman before her, gazed down at the untroubled countenance. A thin, wailing cry startled her from her reverie. She swung on her moccasined heel and glanced at the child lying where she had placed it at its birth, on a rough crib at the other side of the room. A strange smile lighted up her features. She took the child in her arms and removed from its neck a small object which the dying mother had placed there. This she thrust into the bosom of her deerskin shirt. Wrapping the child in a blanket, she stepped swiftly and silently from the room and out into the night. The rude streets

of the village were deserted and all the houses in darkness. The sky overhead was cloudless and moonless, and only the wan light of the stars showed the dim outlines of the settlement.

Outanie knew there would be a guard at the gate, so she crept to the opposite side of the enclosure. As she crept close to the wall she heard the measured step of an approaching sentry. The soldier advanced steadily until he was directly opposite the point where she was hidden. He went some steps beyond, then paused as if listening. A sound had reached his ears, but it was so thin, so faint, so short that he concluded that his fancy was playing him tricks and resumed his lonely promenade.

Outanie, peering over the wall, waited until he had disappeared round a distant salient. Then she clambered over the logs and, with the white baby pressed close to her heart, broke into the swift Indian lope which soon carried her into the impenetrable shadow of the environing forest. Once in the woods' recesses she paused to consider her future plan. Her canoe lay in its covert near the river bank, but she knew it would be impossible for her to make headway against the torrent. Consequently, she decided to abandon her boat. She procured from it, however, her rifle and a piece of board. With her hunting

knife she cut a square of deerskin from her tent and binding it to the board, fashioned a rude conveyance for the child. This she strapped to her back, and having thus prepared herself, began her long journey toward the far distant lands of the Ottawawas.

CHAPTER II

THE LIVING OAK

It was the month of corn on the upper Allegheny, where lay the seat of Pontiac, chief of the Ottawawas, and head of the six tribes. The village was unusually large, for the Ottawawas were a powerful and numerous tribe. The stretch of country between the upper Allegheny and Lake Erie was then unbroken territory, as far as the white race was concerned. The nearest trading post of the pale-faces lay some miles to the south, where the confluent streams of the Allegheny and Monongahela merged into the mightier flow of the Ohio.

The Indian village presented an animated scene on this morning in late summer time. The hunting parties had come in after prosperous expeditions into the neighboring haunts of game. Deer meat was plentiful. The crops, too, had prospered and the people of Pontiac could look forward to a winter whose rigors need give them no dismay.

Consequently the village was full of chattering squaws and romping, naked children, dancing and shouting in their rude games. Before the door of nearly every long house sat, or reclined full length upon the sod, a small group of braves. Of the latter, those who were awake puffed contentedly upon their long pipes. The others slept peacefully in the warm sunshine.

In front of the great house of Pontiac the chief sat alone. A deep, vertical furrow cleft his brow, and his eyes were full of gloom. Although the stem of his pipe was clenched between his teeth, no smoke issued from his lips. For many minutes the ashes in the bowl had been cold. Some of the braves strolling by noticed the gloomy aspect of their chief and one of them slowly shook his head.

"Ugh!" he grunted. "The heart of Pontiac is like a stone."

Another puffed silently a few seconds before he made reply:

"The tent of the great chief is cold. He mourns the lost Outanie."

Even as they spoke there was a louder note in the outcrying of the children, and the braves glanced sharply in their direction. They saw a cluster of figures at the forest edge, which was rapidly growing larger as leaping boys and run-

ning squaws joined it. The men now stood, attentively surveying this excited group. It burst asunder at last, and there strode out of the heart of it a tall, lithe squaw, holding, uplifted in her hands, a naked papoose.

With the women and children trailing behind her, wildly waving their arms and uttering shrill cries of excitement and wonder, the squaw made her way to the tent in front of which sat the silent chief. Before him she paused. Pontiac took the pipe from his set lips and glanced up at her.

"Ugh!" he said.

"Outanie comes back," cried the woman, a high note of pride vibrating in her voice. "No longer Outanie, the Dead-Branch, but Outanie, the Living Oak, and the mother of a prince. Behold, great chief, the son of Pontiac!"

She bent and placed the child upon the knees of the Indian. Pontiac looked up at her without change of expression. The only visible indication of what was passing within his soul was the fact that he puffed slowly twice upon his smokeless pipe before he spoke.

"It is many moons," he said at last, "since Outanie sat by Pontiac's fire."

Her body did not shrink from him. She held

herself straight and proud and looked level into his eyes.

"The great chief," she said, "rebuked his squaw. The great chief greatly desired a son. He said nothing of a woman child. How was Outanie to know?"

The child on Pontiac's knees began to cry, and he took the little form into his sinewy fingers and thrust it up before her. She clasped it to her breast and its wailing ceased.

It was beneath the dignity of a warrior to question his squaw, but Outanie knew that curiosity must be consuming the heart of the chief, so she went on.

"Outanie said in her heart, 'My lord desires a son. If there come to him a daughter of the Ottawawas the heart of Pontiac will not be proud, but bitter with grief. So I shall go apart from my own people until the child be born. If a woman child, then shall the river bear us away and the sight of Outanie shall not offend the eyes of Pontiac. If a man child, then shall Outanie return to her own people bearing in her arms as a precious gift a warrior and a prince of Pontiac's line.' So Outanie got into her canoe and sailed eastward and southward and so she came upon a village of the pale faces in the bend of the river bank. There was she sheltered through the snows,

and there among the white men was the red child born in the third moon of the freshets. Outanie's strength was as nothing against the swollen river, so she came on foot through the forests. She will sit by Pontiac's fire and reign in Pontiac's long house. I have spoken."

Her thin features, her attenuated limbs, and the shreds of the deer-skin hunting habit, the tatters of her leggins and moccasins, all bore mute witness of the hardships she had undergone. No notice was taken of these, however. Pontiac merely bowed his head gravely as a sign that he was satisfied with the explanation she had given. Pressing the child to her heart she went into his tent.

In her long journey from the banks of the Mohawk to the lands bordering on the Great Lakes, Outanie had indeed endured hardships, surmounted obstacles, and faced great perils, but the harder part of her task was before her. She must, year in and year out until her own life should end, keep living and natural this lie she had created. She must watch this developing child, careful to renew continually the turmeric stain she had prepared for its skin. She must look out for strange traits of character, and instill into the mind and spirit of the child the stern Indian virtues.

There were deep anxieties and real dangers to be faced by Outanie. She knew that the punishment for her deception would be death and a dishonored name among her people, should the truth ever be revealed; and there were so many ways in which it might be revealed. But few of these anxieties pressed upon her for the present. She was an Indian woman living in the day that was, and heeding little the promise of the morrow.

The child was called Rushing Water in the recollection of the Mohawk freshets. Under her care he grew in strength and body. She had proclaimed that a miracle attended his birth, that the great spirit had come to her in a dream and warned her to practise certain rites over him with the rise of every sun, by virtue of which he foretold that the child would be a mighty chief and a war leader of many nations. Under cover of the belief thus created, she repaired each morning to the forest to bathe the little body in the vegetable juice which she used to stain its skin. After the first year had gone by a new perplexity came upon her. The growing locks of the child showed a disposition to curl. She knew that the hair of all her people was straight. Part of her morning's obligation thereafter was to grease the child's hair with bear's fat in order to keep it from curl-

ing. By these devices she made her fraud successful and Rushing Water, gaining in stature and muscular strength with each succeeding year, assumed, as by right of birth, a leadership over the other Indian children. He was easily first in all their games requiring skill and strength.

In these days another anxiety came upon Outanie. There were games at which Rushing Water revolted, although they were a source of great joy to his youthful companions. The plucking of living birds was one of these. While the other red children shrieked with delight, Rushing Water scowled and turned away his face. His first disgrace came, however, in his twelfth year. The Ottawawas had gone on the warpath against one of the tribes of the Iroquois Republic. Their war party returned with several prisoners, and as these bound figures were dragged into the village all the squaws and children surrounded them, chattering with pleasure and excitement. Rushing Water, his eyes alight, ran with his companions to the forest edge and followed in the shouting rabble the three Seneca braves.

The great council of the tribe was held that evening and the torture and death decreed. The next morning the three Indian prisoners met their fate. In order that the entertainment might be prolonged they suffered one by one. The first

Seneca bound to the stake regarded his tormentors with the stoical contempt of his race, and let the flames from the fagots lick up his limbs and body without a cry of pain. When the glazed eyeballs and drooping head announced that his agony was over, there was a cry of fierce satisfaction from the braves gathered around, mingled with the shriller ejaculations of the women and children. One little figure alone stood motionless in that crowd of savage onlookers. One little face was sullen and scowling. One pair of eyes, among all those black eyes gleaming with satisfaction, was wide with childish horror.

The second Seneca was of weaker fibre than the first. Although he made a brave effort to face his fiery fate unmoved, the final agony brought a low whimper from his lips like the whine of a dog with a broken back. It struck on the ears of his tormentors as a note of sweetest music. More wild and shrill even than the howl of delight which marked the death of his predecessor at the stake, was the yelp of the braves, and higher was the joyous shrieking of the squaws and children. All eyes were fixed upon the writhing figure bound to the stake, and none noticed little Rushing Water with his face buried in his hands.

There was a scarlet cloud hung like a curtain



By these devices she made her fraud successful

from the western portal through which the day god had retired, and in the far east a misty and remote star hung in the soft gray of the summer twilight, when they led forth the third of the doomed warriors. He was a magnificent specimen of his race, slender, straight and strong as a sapling, wearing his eagle feather proudly and stepping to his doom with a gravity befitting his rank and reputation. As they led him to the stake and loosened the lariat to bind him, he looked out upon them with a high contempt. His lips opened and his voice came forth.

"Dogs of the Lenape!" he addressed them.

A howl of rage interrupted him and more than one brave poised his tomahawk. But Pontiac scowled at these impetuous members of his tribe and stilled the uproar with his lifted hand.

"Let him speak," he said sternly. "Shall the scolding of a Seneca woman enrage warriors?"

"Dogs of the Lenape," the Seneca began again, without even looking in the direction of the Ottawawas' chief, "are the Ottawawa men so fearful of death that they have to be bound to a stake? Do they drink from their mothers' breasts the white poison that makes men's souls afraid? Spare the good deer thongs; the Seneca can stand in the circle of flame."

So they did not bind him, and he stood with

his back against the upright, gazing out upon them with serene eyes.

Ne-te-wa, the medicine man of the Ottawawas, advanced with his flaming pine knot and ignited the heap of fagots. The tongues of fire leaped up around the legs and loins of the Seneca. The circle of Ottawawas gathered around grew silent and searched his face for some sign of weakness, some indication of his suffering. There was none there. At last the impatience of the torturers broke the bonds of silence.

"Do you not suffer, Seneca?" they asked.
"Does not the fire feed upon you?"

His one answer was to break into a low, proud chant full of the glorification of his own people and contempt for his tormentors. He said, while the flames gnawed their way into his flesh:

"The Senecas are a brave people.
They breed warriors and sagamores.
Their women wait upon chiefs.
Their tents are hung with the scalps of the Ottawawas.
The Ottawawas are a race of sick men.
They have no speech, they snarl like dogs.
Their women are braver than their men."

Again the rage of the Ottawawas broke bounds, and again their voices drowned the death song

of the Seneca. The captive chief began to laugh.

"So," he said, "the Ottawawas do not even know how to torture a captured enemy. Would you see how a Seneca can die? Then fill my pipe with tobacco and give it to me."

Pontiac, who had watched his victim with narrowing eyes, gave a short, sharp command to one of the young men. This buck picked up a pipe full of tobacco and thrust it into the hands of the Seneca.

Reaching his bare hand into the blazing pile of fagots, the captive Indian grasped one of the red brands and setting the pipe in his mouth lighted the tobacco and began to smoke. Then he stepped forward and seated himself, cross-legged, into the fire. From his lips there came forth another song.

"In the land of the Senecas there are singing birds that sing true.

In the land of the Ottawawas the men are singing birds that lie.

In the land of the Senecas the hearts of warriors are of oak.

In the land of the Ottawawas the hearts of warriors are weeds that turn to water when pressed."

Pontiac strode forward.

"Peace, Seneca!" he commanded. "Pontiac, chief of the Ottawawas, speaks. The Seneca is a brave warrior. Were he not a murderer of Pontiac's people and spoiled by the fire, Pontiac would send him free to his own people. But he shall suffer no more. He is a warrior, and here is a warrior's death."

As he spoke he swung his sinewy arm and drove the point of his tomahawk into the skull of his victim.

Among the cries with which his people greeted this act of Indian clemency, there was one strange sound. It was the sound of a child sobbing.

CHAPTER III

THE LANE OF DEATH

In the bight of one of the numerous windings of French Creek, Pontiac's camp was pitched. The tepees had been erected in a clearing of irregular outline some three hundred yards in diameter on the crest of a slight eminence which had deflected the stream from its course. Heavy pines screened it from observation. The slope ran down from the site of the village on the northerly side to an indentation in the river bank, which, with its heavy fringe of laurel, afforded an excellent covert for the canoes of the band. On the opposite side a slight trail wound through the pines to a ford beyond which was a portage much used by the Ottawawas. Through this trail, as the sun was setting, there loped into the village three braves of Pontiac's tribe, driving before them a slender Illinois whose arms were bound behind him at wrists and elbows with thongs of deerskin. The captive was a youth scarcely beyond boyhood, but the three dried tufts hanging

at his belt indicated that he had attained a warrior's rank.

He was driven directly to the spot where Pontiac sat smoking, the curious women and children rushing from all directions with shrill cries of excitement, and the warriors slowly and with dignity gathering in to hear the story of his capture and learn the nature of his doom. Pontiac withdrew his pipe from his lips and looked up at the three braves.

"What do my sons bring me out of the forest?" he asked.

The oldest of the three hunters answered:

"A tree-cat whom we found asleep," he said.

The old chief bent one contemptuous glance upon the young Illinois.

"Tree-cats shouldn't sleep in Pontiac's empire," he said.

The eyes of the captive met those of the old chief without faltering.

"These," he said, with a glance at the grim trophies at his belt, "are flowers that the Illinois gathered in Pontiac's empire. The Illinois warrior has a liking for the scalps of Ottawawa dogs, so he came into Pontiac's country for more."

"He has not paid for those he has obtained already," said Pontiac. "His own scalp is too

cheap a price, but as it is all he has Pontiac's women shall have to take that from him."

The chief turned from the captive to the hunters.

"Let him be securely bound," he said, "and kept under double guard. Let no meat be given him and no drink. Tomorrow we shall turn him over to the women and children."

A loud cry of delight rose from the assembled tribe. The Illinois was hurled into a rudely constructed hut and Pontiac's people dispersed, little groups gathering to discuss the entertainment promised for the morrow.

The fate for which the Illinois had been reserved was the one most cunningly devised to try the fortitude of a warrior. Pontiac had decreed that he should run the "lane of death," yet there was no sign of fear on the face of the captive, who sat on his haunches in the prison cabin. When the shadows fell the two bucks on guard in front of the hut lighted a fire, and the rising and falling flame threw its red light fitfully on that proud countenance. The night wore on but the eyelids of the captive never drooped, and his guards looking in from time to time could catch no sign of relaxation on the set features, and could only meet the defiant glare of the wide open eyes.

Silence settled on the camp and the surround-

ing forest. A slight breeze from the west sighed through the tree-tops and bore to the ears of the captive and the two sentinel Ottawawas the mournful hoot of an owl crying on some distant branch. The dark hours had worn on slowly and it was close to midnight when a new sound, slight as it was, caught the quick ear of the Illinois. He glanced quickly at the two braves in front of the hut. They sat like stone figures. Behind him a slight creaking sound continued. Slowly altering his position he glanced keenly at the wall of logs behind him. One of the timbers moved slowly up and then inward. For a few minutes the Illinois was uncertain that there was any motion and that it was not the changing intensity of the firelight and the movement of shadows, due to its variations, that had deceived his sight; but at last with a slight crunching sound the log bore in. At the same time a soft sound came from in front of the hut. Swinging quickly on his haunches the Illinois faced the portal, and the guard, who had stood up and was now looking in the door, met only the glance of that expressionless face.

In changing his position the Illinois had adroitly covered with his body the protruding log. With a few gruff words the Ottawawa turned and went back to his seat by the fire. A long period of ab-

solute quiet succeeded. The Illinois let his body recline as if seeking slumber. He had felt a slight touch on his shoulder. As he now faced the opening in the log there was pressed to his lips a gourd of water, held in a hand that had been thrust in through the opening. The captive leaned forward eagerly and drank to the last drop. The gourd was withdrawn. The parched throat of the Illinois had been relieved, and he listened intently for some further sound. All he heard was the faint swish of the breeze in the tree-tops and the mournful note of the distant owl, with an occasional murmur from the two figures seated by the fire in front of his cabin.

At last there was another pressure on his arm and something was held up to his mouth. His keen sense of smell recognized the odor of dried deer meat. Eagerly the captive received the food, piece by piece. Finally his hunger was satisfied and the hand that fed him was withdrawn.

At the door the warriors on guard replenished their fire which had burned low. Looking up the captive saw the new moon appear over a tall pine at the edge of the clearing. He watched it while it slowly passed across the restricted field of his vision. It had just vanished when an all but inaudible "Hist!" from behind attracted his attention. As he turned and looked through the aper-

ture he saw a face gazing in at him. A sudden, upward sweep of the fire outside illuminated it fully, and each feature seemed to burn itself into the memory of the Illinois.

"Dream face," the young warrior murmured to himself.

Cautiously he shifted his position until his ear was at the opening, and then in a low, clear whisper the words came to him: "Tomorrow you run the 'lane of death.' Let my friend listen. The tall pine at the edge of the clearing has new markings,—one large one above a smaller one. From that tree the trail leads through the thicket. Follow it. There is a canoe at the ford."

The Illinois nodded his head to indicate that he understood. When he looked again for the face it had gone. The ear of the Illinois was tuned for the slightest sound but not a twig snapped. Whoever it was that had unexpectedly given him food and drink and comfort, dexterously and noiselessly replaced the log in its former position and withdrew in utter silence.

There was activity among the tepees at dawn. Preparations for the coming entertainment were soon under way. Pine torches were cut, switches and clubs were distributed among the small girls and boys, and the larger boys were armed with poles, seven or eight feet long, which had been

sharpened to a point that was hardened in the flame. Still older boys were given tomahawks and knives, and carefully instructed in their use so that they might cut and tear but strike no vital spot, until the victim had reached the end of the lane. Then they were to fall upon him and make an end.

The warriors would take no active part in the torture. Their duty would simply be to keep the victim in the lane and prevent his escape.

The noon meal had been eaten when one of the braves assembled the women and children for the game. The borders of the path of torture were two lines of women and youngsters. They were so arranged that for the first hundred yards of the course groups of women and younger children alternated, the women holding pine torches and the children armed with sticks and clubs. Below that stood the older boys armed with their long pointed poles, and below them again stood the youths just below the warrior's estate, with their knives and tomahawks. A double row of warriors with arms folded was lined outside the active participants and guarded each end of the course.

Rushing Water had been assigned a stand with the older boys, although he was now only in his fourteenth year. Behind him, encroaching upon the

clearing like a leader of the regimented trees, stood a tall pine bearing two fresh scars on its bark.

When this arrangement had been perfected a fire was lighted and the women were directed to ignite their torches by thrusting them into the flame. They did this and resumed their places in the line. Then Pontiac raised his hand in signal and the two young warriors repaired to the prison hut, returning with the Illinois.

He was a proud boyish figure as he stood at the head of the line, his arms still bound but his feet free. The spectators saw him raise his eyes and look over the tops of the trees as he noted the position of the sun in the heavens. Then they yelled with rage as he coolly and contemptuously swept his eye over the assembled tribe. A second of deep silence followed. Then Pontiac signalled again and a woman standing behind the Illinois thrust her burning torch in between his shoulder blades. At the same instant the warriors who held him by the arms, cut the thongs that bound his wrists and flung him forward.

"Run, cat of the Illinois!" they said.

Shrill shrieks rose from the squaws and children, and the double row of cruel eager faces bent forward. The warriors did not join in the wild

outcry but stood with their arms folded in contemptuous silence.

The urging to speed was not needed. Like a human arrow shot from the bow string of demoniacal cruelty, the young victim began his race of torture. His swift glance had picked out the "dream face" of the preceding night among the tormentors, and there was hope in his heart notwithstanding the burning brands that were thrust into his naked flesh, the birchen withes that cut into his shoulders, and the pointed spearlike poles that were thrust into his body.

Shriek after shriek accompanied the blows rained upon him, but they came from the tormentors and not from the victim, who with set features and pressed lips, and limbs that only faltered now and again when a blow from a heavy club striking on his skull staggered him for an instant, continued his headlong course down that narrow pathway.

He already could see at the end of it the older boys with their naked knives and uplifted tomahawks, and behind them the dark figures of the massed warriors standing with folded arms. But his quick eye had picked out something else. On his left hand as he ran, there was one little gap in the line. Like a snake he turned as he reached it and sprang through. One of the guarding

braves on the outside interposed, but the Illinois' clenched fist landed on the throat of the Ottawawa with terrific force, and the latter measured his length on the sod, while the fugitive sprang like a cat over his prostrate body and made straight for the notched pine at the edge of the clearing, which he had recognized by the glistening white of the fresh wood under the broken bark.

Rushing Water, who stood near the point at which the young Illinois turned, had hurled his tomahawk at the head of the captive but he now turned in quick pursuit, and with his knife in his hand was the first to reach the mouth of the narrow trail down which the Illinois had fled. There was a deeper note now in the uproar, for the warriors had joined their hunting yelp to the hysterical cries of the women and children. Close at the heels of Rushing Water came two of the most noted of the tribe's younger warriors,—Wolf Tooth and Red Rattlesnake, and behind them streamed the whole band of warriors mad with an unsated blood thirst. For a minute Rushing Water kept close to the heels of the fleeing Illinois, but as they reached the narrowest part of the trail, the boy stumbled and fell and Wolf Tooth, tripping on his prostrate body, lurched headlong to the earth. Instantly half a dozen

headlong warriors heaped themselves upon these two.

The first to extract himself was young Wolf Tooth who, although his ankle had been sprained, resumed the pursuit. The accident had saved the fugitive, however. The fact that the Ottawawas had laid aside their rifles and were armed only with their tomahawks, gave him an added advantage. He gained the ford unharmed, and turning with a loud whoop of defiance shook his fist at his advancing pursuers. An instant later he had seized the paddle of the canoe and was sweeping down the stream, while the baffled Ottawawas screeched their impotent anger from the bank.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRIAL

Uttering short guttural cries of angry disappointment, the Ottawawa warriors surged back to the brow of the hill where their chief sat awaiting their return. The look on their faces and the snarl in their voices apprised him that they had been unsuccessful. He wasted no word in question but his long arm snapped out toward the north, the index finger extended.

"The boats, quick!" he commanded. "Let a dozen of the swiftest with the paddle make pursuit. You, Wolf Tooth, shall lead!"

The young warrior singled out hung his head.

"Wolf Tooth is lamed," he said. "He scarce can walk."

"Then let Rattlesnake take command," said Pontiac, quickly. "But speed, my sons, speed!"

In a flash the dozen braves had disappeared among the pines and soon four canoes were sweeping round the point in hot pursuit. Two days passed before the party returned. A scout re-

ported their approach by way of the river, and, save for the chief, the whole tribe gathered at the ford, eager for news.

Wolf Tooth, whose disability had gone, hailed the warriors as they came into view. They made no answer but paddling up to the ford drove the noses of their canoes on the bank.

"He was not captured, then!" cried young Wolf Tooth, running forward to greet them.

The warriors as they stepped out of the boats ignored his question, and with solemn faces and silent tongues, fell in behind Rattlesnake and proceeded up the trail toward Pontiac's tepee, the women and children and the curious warriors who had not taken part in the pursuit falling in behind. Something in the demeanor of the returning braves had impressed even the smallest children and it was a silent and wondering band that trailed along behind the twelve braves of Rattlesnake's party. No word was said before the assemblage paused in front of the chief, who sat at the door of his dwelling, his pipe in his mouth.

The sun was low, and from the crimson curtains draped above its couch the red glow was reflected on the faces of the stern men who, with folded arms, stood confronting the great Ottawawa leader. Pontiac surveyed them calmly.

"The Rattlesnake has no fresh scalp at his

belt," he said quietly, his cold voice clashing on the silence like the slither of a rapier blade on opposing steel.

There was a deep intaking of breath that ran through the whole tribe, as they awaited the answer which everyone realized would be portentous.

"No fresh scalp hangs at my belt," the Rattlesnake answered sternly, "but my heart has a heavy word for the ears of Pontiac."

"Let the Rattlesnake speak," said the chief.

"The Illinois carries the skin of his skull unbroken because the Ottawawa camp holds a traitor," said the young warrior.

The hush that fell upon the tribe was tense, oppressive. Pontiac slowly raised his head and his glance travelled from face to face in the circle of warriors before him until it rested upon the countenance of Wolf Tooth. That young man, singled out for protracted scrutiny, stirred uneasily under the stern, cold gleam from his chief's eyes. He cast a swift, sidelong glance at the accusing warrior, and then, fixing his eyes again upon Pontiac, folded his arms, threw up his chin, and waited.

"Can the Rattlesnake name the traitor?" the chief asked. "He stands before you," responded the Rattlesnake immediately, as his left arm

straightened and his finger pointed at Wolf Tooth.

"Let the great chief behold the traitor!"

All eyes turned on the accused. He looked at the Rattlesnake as if in amazement.

"Who dares use such a word to me?" he hissed, his eyes blazing.

"I!" answered the Rattlesnake sternly. "I accuse!"

"And I accuse!" echoed a warrior standing behind him.

"And I accuse!" cried ten other voices in succession.

A wild cry swelling deep at first with the rage of the warriors and whining away in the wail of the woman, greeted this twelve-fold accusation. When there was silence again Pontiac said:

"Wolf Tooth, the warrior, stands accused by twelve warriors of his tribe. There shall be council and trial. Let the accused be bound, and let the council assemble when the sun is midway in the west on the morrow."

He slowly rose from his seat and went into his tent. Wolf Tooth permitted himself to be bound and was thrust into the hut which had sheltered the Illinois.

When the council fire was lighted on the following afternoon, it was a grave band of warriors and sagamores who silently seated themselves

around it. Pontiac sat in the place of honor, and at his side were the older men of the tribe. Within the circle stood two men, one of them the accused, Wolf Tooth, the other the accuser, Rattlesnake. A totem pole had been set in front of the chief and before this, as a preliminary to the legal proceedings, a medicine man made incantation. When his voice was silent, Pontiac signed to Rattlesnake to speak.

"From noon to noon," said the young prosecutor, "we followed the Illinois down the stream, then we found hidden in the laurel the canoe in which he had escaped. It had been provisioned for journey. It was the canoe of Wolf Tooth."

The speaker's tone was low and dispassionate. At his announcement, a deep sigh rang through the assemblage.

"Now let Gray Cloud speak," he said.

One of the dozen braves who had followed the Rattlesnake in the pursuit, cast off his blanket and stood up.

"The landing place of the canoes is among the laurel at the north of the camp. The day before the Illinois warrior escaped Wolf Tooth moored his canoe at the ford at the end of the trail. It was evening and I saw him put the bark on the beach and come through the trees to the village. Gray Cloud has spoken."

He sat down and wrapped his blanket around him. The Rattlesnake beckoned to another warrior. The young brave indicated rose and pointing to the scarred pine tree at the head of the trail, said:

"The tree that shows where the path to the ford begins is twice broken in the bark. The hatchet of Wolf Tooth cut the bark. I saw him strike the tree with his tomahawk. I have spoken."

As this witness resumed his place in the circle, Rattlesnake again opened his lips.

"Pontiac knows," he said, "who were the guards in front of the prison house in which the Illinois was kept. Wolf Tooth was one of these. I was the other. During the night we heard a slight noise and Wolf Tooth went to the door and inquired. He returned and told me it was nothing but the shifting of the prisoner on the ground. Pontiac knows that Wolf Tooth was stationed at a point near where the captive broke from the line. All know that he was the first of the warriors to reach the head of the trail in pursuit. All know that he fell and blocked the trail, thus giving the prisoner time to get to the beach. All know that he refused the leadership of the pursuing party. He walks all right now, chief of the Ottawawas! What say you, my brothers of

this household? An enemy of our tribe who has taken the scalps of our people is brought down to our village. He sleeps under the guard of one who speaks to him privately. He is allowed to escape through the weakness of a warrior of this tribe. He speeds straight for the hidden trail, guided by the scars on the pine which the same warrior had cut with his tomahawk. The pursuit is impeded by the same warrior. Bidden to hunt and to capture the same warrior pleads injury. At the foot of the trail the captive finds the canoe of this warrior, provisioned for his needs, which, contrary to the custom of our people, this same warrior had moored without cover. The name of this warrior is Wolf Tooth! Brothers, I demand judgment!"

Rattlesnake paused, folded his arms on his broad chest, and waited. There was a stir among the seated warriors and a shifting of glances to the accused brave who had risen to his feet and now stood facing Pontiac. His was a striking and not unpleasing figure. His reputation as a warrior was high, and the old sagamores had looked upon him as a brave of much promise. Something of the spirit that had won for him such high regard stiffened now his young frame and gave an upward tilt to his sharp chin. All bent forward eagerly for his words.

"Let Wolf Tooth speak!" said Pontiac gravely.

"Wolf Tooth is no traitor," began the accused.

"Wolf Tooth is a warrior. He is not a child, he has six times uttered the scalp yell. One day Wolf Tooth went to hunt. He had seen the trail of a huge bear in the woods, but it was a trail three days old, and bent westward along the bank of the stream. So he stocked his canoe and set forth. But the bear had turned on his tracks and in the hour of the short shadows I met him. My shooting stick spoke a lie, and I had to use knife and hatchet. It was a good fight, Great Chief—there are marks of it here and there."

He held out a scarred arm and, tearing away his shirt, revealed a healing wound on his breast. Pontiac nodded.

"If the Rattlesnake lies not," resumed the young brave, "he will say there was a dead bear in my boat."

"It is true," admitted the accuser from his seat.

"So I returned with my boat still provisioned," Wolf Tooth proceeded. "I was wearied, and left the canoe at the ford, intending to unload it when I had rested. As I passed the chief pine, I thought how I had crushed in the skull of the bear with my tomahawk and wondered if it still held its edge. Twice I tried it on the tree bark.

That night Pontiac commanded me to watch with Rattlesnake at the door of the prisoner. The next day we were making ready for the torture. I had not slept, Great Chief, I was weary with wounds: was it strange that I forgot my boat? When the Illinois broke the line Rushing Water led the pursuit. In the neck of the trail the boy fell; I was close behind and tripped on his body. When I regained my feet my ankle would not bear my weight. So I refused the leadership of the pursuing party because I knew the fugitive was swift, and the pursuers must be even more swift. This is not the voice of the singing bird, but the thing that is true, my brothers."

He folded his arms and waited judgment, his glance roving from one stern inscrutable face to another all round that grim circle. His chin sank on his chest.

Pontiac, without rising, turned to the first figure at his left.

"What says my brother?" he asked, gravely. "Speaks Wolf Tooth truth?"

"He lies," replied the Indian addressed, shortly.

"What says my brother?" Pontiac repeated, turning to the next.

"Wolf Tooth lies," the man answered.

So the poll proceeded according to the ancient tribal form. The warriors wasted no words; their

answers were short. Each of them in turn heard the chief's question, "What says my brother?" and each of them answered it. Two voices only spoke for the accused. They were both young braves. One said:

"Wolf Tooth slew the bear. Brave men do not lie."

The other answered simply:

"The words of Wolf Tooth are true."

As the weight of the verdict against him became more and more apparent, the young warrior's head bent lower and lower.

The shame put upon him seemed to bow him down like a heavy burden. Only when the last vote was given and a low moan broke from the women, did he look up. Pontiac had stood up to pronounce judgment and doom, and the majesty of a great chief sat on his bold, high brow.

"Wolf Tooth," he thundered in a terrible voice, "the name men give you is well chosen. The fang of the wolf tears the wolf's throat. You are condemned by your tribe. Make ready for the stake, for you die by the fire."

A wailing sound swept over the assembled tribe. It was cut short by a gasp of surprise. An agile, boyish figure had leaped over the shoulder of a sitting brave and advanced into the circle. Pon-

tiac in surprise looked down into the face of Rushing Water.

"What means this?" he sternly demanded. "Is it thus a lad should break in upon a council?"

"The tribe condemns unjustly, oh chief, my father!" he cried. "It was not Wolf Tooth who gave aid to the Illinois warrior."

"Ha!" exclaimed Pontiac. "Who, then?"

"Rushing Water," answered the lad. "When the doom of the Illinois was said, Manitu spoke in the heart of Rushing Water. The voice in his heart said, 'Help the brave young warrior.' Rushing Water obeyed. He had seen Wolf Tooth moor his canoe. He had seen the marks on the king pine's coat. He pointed the way of escape to the captive, for so Manitu spoke in his heart."

The shock of the revelation held the tribe spell-bound. Pontiac shivered as if an icy wind had pierced to his marrow. His face was gray. A low cry of anger was breaking out from the tribe, but the uplifted hand of the chief stilled it.

"Pontiac longed for a son," he said in a dull, broken voice. "Manitu sent Rushing Water, the only issue of a chief. But justice shall be done. The traitor dies whoever he may be. In place of Wolf Tooth, Pontiac shall put his own heart in the flames. Bind the boy!"

A shriek, loud, piercing, repeated, and rising,

more shrill, with each repetition, broke the silence as Outanie tore through the crowd and flung her arms round the boy.

"You shall not!" she screamed, her features fierce and her eyes flaming. "Beware of the blasting curse of the Great Spirit if you lay a hand on his chosen one!"

With his great clenched fist upraised, Pontiac advanced a step, but before he could strike, the voice of Icktoosh, the old medicine man, arrested his arm.

"The squaw speaks truth, Pontiac!" he said. "Hold thy hand—the word of Manitu must be obeyed. The lad did but what he was bidden by the chief of the thunder clouds. Invoke not the anger of the Flaming Spear, King of the Ottawawas!"

A second Pontiac stood undecided; then he turned and strode to his tepee. With the excited chatter of women and the guttural exclamations of the braves, the assemblage broke up. Wolf Tooth bent down and gently stroked the shoulder of the boy, who lay sobbing on the heaving breast of Outanie.

CHAPTER V

RED AND WHITE

Outanie's report of the supernatural influences directing the destiny of her son,—a report often repeated and much exaggerated as the years went by—invested Rushing Water with a mysterious interest, not only to the people of his own tribe but to those of distant nations who had heard the marvelous tale.

It served a double purpose for Outanie. In the first place it cloaked under the veil of a sacred ritual the physical treatment of her son whereby she kept his skin brown and his hair straight. The tumeric stain was easily obtained, the woods being full of this wild weed, whose distilled sap at the same time produced the color effect she desired, and, because of its vegetable nature, did not injure the skin to which it was applied. She prepared a great quantity of this stain, for she feared that there might come a time when it would be impossible for her to procure the wild growth that yielded it.

As the boy grew older his natural curiosity as to the reason for the mysterious rites she practised upon him, demanded an explanation from Outanie.

"Outanie, mother," said the little fellow one morning, "why do you bathe me in the dark water?"

The squaw hesitated a moment.

"Listen, Rushing Water," she said at last, "this is my reason: When you are grown to your full stature and go forth with braves to war, you are to be a great chieftain. There in the east"—she extended her right hand toward where the sun was reddening the horizon—"and there to the north"—and her left hand swept out toward the great lakes—"there dwell a strange people. Of two tribes they are. Their skin is not the skin of the red men but is like the white bark of the silver birch. They are hungry for land. Already they have taken the lands of the Lenape in the north and have driven many nations of the red people from the shores of the great waters. Unless a great warrior arise to lead the red race against the white, they will rob us of our hunting grounds and leave no place on the earth for our home. The great spirit has chosen Rushing Water as the leader who is to save his own people. He said to Outanie that while Rushing Water is a child, Outanie shall bathe him daily

in this dark liquor which is to make him strong in body and brave in heart. He has said that when Rushing Water grows into boyhood, he shall bathe himself as Outanie has bathed him, and shall anoint his head daily with the stained bear grease. If Rushing Water shall ever neglect to perform these rites, then his skin shall bleach to the likeness of the white people and his heart shall shrivel within him, and a great affliction of body shall come upon him and he shall die, for he shall have disobeyed the words of Manitu."

She showed him how to prepare the liquor and how to stain and apply the bear grease to his hair.

But there was another way in which the superstitious feeling of the Indians with respect to Rushing Water protected Outanie from the discovery of her great deception. From his infancy the boy was looked upon as one set apart for a great task. Traits of character strange in his people, which would have exposed him to punishment and contempt otherwise, were regarded with more toleration and less wonder when they manifested themselves in the chosen of the Indian's God. The boy had been sternly reprimanded by his elders for an outbreak of tears occasioned by the killing of the Senecas, but soon his natural distaste for cruelty ceased to excite

wonder and to provoke reprobation. Indeed, as his body lengthened and toughened, he showed signs of a temper to resent the one and the other. In all the athletic exercises he excelled the boys of the Ottawawa village. In the foot races he was as fleet as the wind, and none other could match him. He soon became so strong and agile a wrestler that when he was fifteen, few among the braves of his tribe ventured to try conclusions with him. His eye was steady and keen, his aim true, his skill with the tomahawk or javelin amazing. The thrust of his paddle drove his canoe with a speed not excelled by that of any of the Indians.

If in woodcraft and their own games and occupations Rushing Water was thoroughly an Indian, he was in other respects a prodigy and a wonder among the wild people. He had none of the taciturnity of his companions, but spoke his mind with the greatest freedom. Instead of the characteristic grunt of satisfaction of the Ottawawa brave, his laughter rang out in the forest free as a bird and merry as a peal of bells. He was passionately devoted to Outanie, whose labors he lightened at every opportunity. If the squaw, now growing aged, were grinding the corn, Rushing Water would fling away from the other boys engaged in their play, dispossess his mother with

rough affection from her seat in front of the long house, and forcibly take from her the grinding stones. If she went forth into the woods to gather dried branches for the fire, he met her on the path and took from her shoulders the heavy bundle of fagots.

His first performance of this kind which attracted the attention of his companions drew forth from them a howl of derision. They gathered around him to watch him grind the corn. At last the sight of the youth engaged in this degrading occupation excited them to taunts. The boldest of them began to cry out upon him.

"Squaw girl," said one, "you shall not have a rifle but shall sit with the women when the men go forth to war."

As the boy worked steadily on others were emboldened to follow the example of the first of his tormenters. At last a cold and dangerous gleam came into the dark brown eyes of Rushing Water and slowly and deliberately he laid down his grinding stones. Then with the spring of a tiger he flung himself at the throat of the oldest of those who surrounded him. This lad, a young giant of seventeen, struggled for a second in the grasp of the young chief, but Rushing Water bore him to the ground and pounded his head against the sod until he was insensible.

Then he stood up glaring at the host of them.

"Rushing Water is a squaw?" he exclaimed. "Well, who wants to come to the squaw's embrace? You, War Eagle?" He pointed a threatening finger at one of his companions. "You, Gray Hawk?" His quick-gleaming eye rested upon another.

The boys shrank back from his furious face. Rushing Water waited a few minutes. His first victim slowly recovered consciousness and writhed away like a snake. Rushing Water resumed his seat on the ground in front of the long house and calmly began to grind the corn.

After that no one called him squaw girl, nor was any remark passed in his hearing upon his strange inclination to perform servile work for his mother.

Another trait strange in the character of the Indian was his insatiable curiosity. He asked questions continually. Pontiac who had watched his growth with proud affection but with a strange uneasiness, taught him all the legends of his people and answered his questions as to their origin and history from the wealth of tradition which was stored in the old warrior's brain. One day as the chief sat before his tent in the sunshine, Rushing Water appeared before him suddenly.

"Father," he exclaimed, "I am tired of the bow and arrow, I want a rifle."

The chief surveyed him thoughtfully.

"Ugh!" he said at last. "Rifles cost many furs. They are not the limbs of trees that may be cut in the forest. When I was a lad all our people fought with bows and arrows."

"But not now," answered the boy. "Now the braves of the Ottawawas carry rifles."

"Ugh!" said Pontiac. "The shooting stick is the weapon of the pale-faces. The Ottawawas bought it from the pale-faces because it is a better weapon than the bow. But rifles, my son, are for braves."

Rushing Water drew himself up to his full height, and although he was then in his seventeenth summer, he had all a man's stature.

"It is unbecoming," he said, "for a young man to boast before his elders, but father"—and his voice quickened and his eyes gleamed—"is there a brave of the Ottawawas who can travel farther in a day or drive the canoe faster or farther than Pontiac's son?"

A slow smile spread gradually over the face of the old warrior.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed. "Rushing Water shall have his shooting stick."

Impatiently Rushing Water waited the day

when his father's promise should be fulfilled. The woods had put off the festival splendor of their autumnal coloring, and stood bare and bleak and brown, awaiting the onset of the rushing north wind like warriors stripped for desperate battle, when a band of traders of the tribe brought back with them from the trading post of the French, the long expected gift. Pontiac received the wayfarers at the door of his long house and they gravely laid before him the fruit of their enterprise. From the stock of firearms the chief selected the longest barrel. He threw the stock to his shoulder and ran his keen black eye along the leveled piece. Then he laid the weapon on the ground and making a sign to the others to be seated round his fire, entered into serious council with them. Rushing Water, burning with impatience, feasted his eyes upon the rifle, as he stood some distance off, but his quick ears caught the conversation and he listened eagerly. Pontiac's questions were short and to the point, and his scouts answered him tersely, but clearly.

"Saw you my great brother, the chief of the French?" Pontiac asked.

The warriors nodded.

"What was the word on his lips?"

The oldest of the interrogated party bent forward on his hips.

"Chief," he answered, "the white warrior spoke true words to us for the ear of Pontiac. Between the pale-face of the north and the pale-face of the south, the war-hatchet hath been raised. The shooting sticks of the white-people will speak to one another with their tongues of fire."

"Ugh!" grunted Pontiac, and for a few seconds he pulled thoughtfully at the long stem of his pipe. At last the other spoke again. He was Strong Bear, a warrior only second in authority to Pontiac.

"This word the white chief spoke to me for the ears of Pontiac," he said. "The great father of the French holds Pontiac dear, like a brother. I am a great chief but he is the greatest chief in the world. The flight of the eagle is far. The domain of the great father of the French is as a thousand flights of the eagle. His children are as the trees of the forest which no man can count. Through me he speaks to Pontiac, the great chief of the Ottawawas. He says let there be peace and love between the white king and his brother the red king. The white foes of the French are the deadly foes of the red men. Where are the Connecticuts? Ask the scattered remnants of the red nations who once dwelt by the sea what has become of their hunting grounds. Have not the

English driven them away? Where the English settlements are can the Indian live? Yet see, my red brother, how it is not the same with the French. We would trade honestly with the red man and not cheat him. We would buy his furs, which are precious to us, with shooting sticks that make him mighty in the hunt and in war, with goods of great value. See with your own eyes! Is it not true that the Indians may hunt their game under the very walls of the forts of the French? Then let the great chief of the Ottawawas make war with the French against our enemy, the English! This was the word of the French chief for the ears of Pontiac."

Strong Bear, having spoken, sat back and smoked stolidly. During his speech there had joined the party an aged member of the tribe. The young warriors had treated him with great respect, making room for him at Pontiac's side. To him the chief now turned.

"Sagamore," he said, "you have heard. The wisdom of years is in you. Speak to my young men."

The old man took his pipe from his lips.

"Men of the Ottawawas, listen to my words," he said slowly and with great gravity. "I am long at the council fire and have listened to the words of many wise men. The French chief is not

a singing bird, there is much truth in his words. The French are better friends of the Indian than are the English. But mark this. Long ago there was a chief among the Leni-Lenape, who was a mighty warrior. But he dreamed of himself as so much greater than he was that he angered Manitu, and Manitu stole his brains from him, so that he imagined vain things. For he said, 'I am so mighty that I am greater than Manitu, I can make the clouds to gather and pour forth rain, I can shoot the crooked arrows of fire across the heavens, I can make the rivers to rush and the darkened sky to speak in crashes that deafen men.' But a sagamore said to him, 'There is that you cannot do.' And he answered and said, 'What is it?' And the sagamore took two pebbles from the beach and handed them to him and said, 'You cannot put these two pebbles at the same time in the same place.' French or English, the white man is one thing and the red man is another, and the two cannot dwell at the same time in the same place. Therefore, I say, let the red man stand aside while the French and the English talk to each other with fire, so that they may wither each other, and the Indian may have his hunting grounds for himself. I have spoken."

The men at the council fire sat thoughtful and silent. At last Pontiac nodded his head.

"The words of Ick-toosh, the Serpent, are words of wisdom," he said. "It shall be as the sagamore counsels."

The men stood up and sauntered off in different directions. Rushing Water waited until they had departed before he presented himself.

"Father," he said, holding out his hands.

The chief bent down and picked up the new rifle from the ground.

"Take it," he said, thrusting it into the outstretched hands. "Use it like a warrior."

CHAPTER VI

THE CRYSTAL ROOD

The short twilight was thickening rapidly before the daylight failed. Gray clouds in heavy banks swept down from the north and overspread the sky. The freshening gale raged through the bare branches of the forest in short, fierce gusts, bitter with the arctic cold of the wilderness beyond the lakes.

Rushing Water stood where Pontiac had left him, looking with shining eyes at the long barreled rifle of French manufacture he held in his hands. Lifting the deer skin curtain that served as a door for the long house, he entered the building.

"Outanie, mother," he cried joyously. "See! Rushing Water is a warrior. See his shooting stick."

On a couch of dried branches set close by the fire in the center stall, a figure stirred.

"Yes, yes, my son," Outanie said, raising her head.

Something in the tone of her voice chilled the

joy in the boy's heart. He dropped his rifle and knelt beside her.

"Outanie, mother," he asked anxiously, "what is the matter?"

The squaw laid her thin wrinkled hand affectionately upon the sinewy hand of the youth.

"Kneel by me and hold my hand, my son," she said, "for Outanie has reached the shore of the unknown country. Her mother calls her. Listen!"

She leaned upon her elbow, her ears intent. The wind was howling, ever more fiercely.

"They call Outanie," she whispered. "All her people who have gone to the happy hunting ground, they call Outanie."

"No! But let me call Ick-Toosh. He will make medicine," cried the boy. "Mother you must stay! You must not go!"

She smiled up at him weakly, and the clasp of her hand on his tightened slightly.

"The Serpent can make no medicine for Outanie," she said. "Outanie is tired here,"—and she placed her free hand over her heart.

Another raging gust tore through the forest and shook the frail cabin.

"Soon, soon!" murmured the squaw. Then in a stronger voice she said: "Listen, Rushing Water, for these are the last words of Outanie.

Canst see through the smoke hole in the roof the red flashes of light that encrimson the gray of the storm? That is Manitu's torch which he lights when the heavens grow dark. Listen! Do you remember what I told you of the dark liquor?"

The boy nodded.

"Then ever remember, for when Rushing Water fails in this, death, the demon, shall come upon him and the evil spirit devour him. One more charm have I for Rushing Water."

She tore open the bosom of her hunting shirt, and raising her head lifted over it a circlet made of rawhide. Hanging from this was an object that glistened in the light of the fire. With an effort the woman sat up on the couch and slipped the rawhide thong around the boy's neck. In the glow of the fire a crystal cross gleamed redly upon her blanket. She fell back on the couch, breathing heavily. For some minutes she closed her eyes. When she opened them again she resumed, but her voice was very low and weak.

"It is," she whispered,—the lad bending his head close to catch the words,—“the badge of Manitu's warrior. It is the totem of the great spirit. Wear it always, but show it to no red man until you are chief of the Ottawawas and the king over the nations.”

Again there was silence in the long house. But

outside, wilder and deeper swelled the roar of the storm. The snow was falling now; great gray clouds of it that seemed to press down upon the afflicted earth and eddied in a devil's dance when the sky was lighted up with the pale rose and wan blue-white gleams of the aurora borealis. The rude walls of the long house trembled under every blow of the furious wind.

"Rushing Water!" the voice was very low but the boy heard it.

"Yes, Outanie, mother," he whispered, bending his face close.

"Listen!" said that low strange voice. "Hear it afar off! Hear it coming! When it comes the soul of Outanie shall ride. It is closer—now. It—comes—Rushing—Water—I——"

With a crash and a roar the wild wave of storm burst shrieking upon the cabin and then swept on.

There was a little tremor in the hand clasped in those of Rushing Water. He waited for the voice again, but it did not come. The hand grew icy cold in his. He pressed his ear to his mother's side, but no heartbeat troubled her breast.

Kneeling beside the couch he pressed the cold hand to his forehead. One great sob shook his frame. Around the cabin the shrieking of the wind rose and fell. Once the blast seemed to

pierce the building, fanning for an instant into high flame the embers in the center of the long house, but Rushing Water neither felt the chill of the entering wind nor noted the red glare of the rising fire. He knelt with his head bent over the dead hand, with as little sign of life as the figure stretched upon the couch.

Behind that sudden gust that had entered the interior of the building glided Pontiac with the silent tread of his people. His blanket was white with the clustered snow flakes. His quick eyes in that high glare of light that passed so suddenly, took in the scene it illuminated. Folding his arms across his deep chest he gazed down at the dead woman and the kneeling boy. He uttered no word and gave no sign, except that the points of his jaws stood out hard as granite with the pressure of his set teeth. The heat of the fire melted the snow on his blanket, and little globes of water dropping from the garment took on in the glow of the embers the aspect of tiny drops of blood.

After many minutes the kneeling figure shivered. Rushing Water released the dead hand held in his and stood erect. Then, for the first time, he noticed that Pontiac was present.

"Father," said the boy, his voice rough and hard as a piece of stone, "Outanie sleeps."

"Yes," answered the chief, and his voice was

like the echo of the voice of Rushing Water, "Outanie sleeps. She has had the heart pain these many moons, my son, although she never told you. Outanie shall wake no more."

For a pace they stood silently regarding the dead woman. Then Pontiac extended his hand and laid it upon the shoulder of the younger man.

"Come, my son," he said, in the same rough hard voice, "Come into the storm."

They walked to the end of the short corridor, unfastened its rawhide curtain, and stepped out into the fury of the blast. There they stood together facing the storm, pelted by the snow flakes, lashed by the gale. At last a deep groan seemed to rend the body of the chief, and his great voice was full of passionate appeal as he cried out into the storm:

"Oh, Manitu, mighty spirit! Oh, Manitu, mighty spirit! Make soft tonight the couch on which the soul of Outanie rests. Make sweet the corn in her mouth, and joyous the songs of birds in her ears. Make peaceful her rest. Oh, Manitu!"

* He had bent forward eagerly as he uttered his prayer. But now he straightened his form and his face grew stern.

"I wish," he said in a voice that was utterly changed, a voice that was low, tortured, tense,

“that the enemies of my people were massed before me. I wish that my war-hatchet were swinging like the flail of the storm, and that the cries of my enemies rose like the shriek of the wind. My eyes are thirsty for the sight of red skulls. My soul cries out for vengeance, for my heart is hurt.”

CHAPTER VII

THE WAR PARTY

Over the drifted snow, traveling swiftly on his snow shoes, there came in the first light of the morning to the village of the Ottawawas a courier, whose call found a fierce echo in the pain-maddened heart of Pontiac. He was a tall Huron. He had set out in all the glory of his war-paint, but the snow swept into his face and the sweat of his struggle through the storm had made the pigment run in streaks so that his face was hideous as he stood before the chief.

"The Red Hawk has a fire word for the ears of Pontiac, from the mouth of the Honnondio," he said, using the word by which the Indians of the lake regions designated the French Governor.

"Let it come to my ears," commanded Pontiac.

"The white chief says to Pontiac," the Huron answered, " 'The English come up from the south to take the strong house where the waters meet. They have many warriors—more than Honnondio can spare for its defense. Pontiac is a wise chief.

He knows the English are the enemies of the red man. He knows the French are the friends of the Ottawa nation. Honnondio therefore begs the war-tomahawk of his red brother. This is his speech and this belt speaks for him.' "

As he concluded the Huron placed in Pontiac's hand the broad belt of wampum which was the French governor's gift.

"Huron, you come to me in good time," replied Pontiac, a grim smile playing over his lips. "There shall be council and the chiefs shall hear the words of Honnondio."

At Pontiac's bidding a great fire was built in the snow and, wrapped in their furs and blankets, the leaders of the allied nations seated themselves around the blazing logs. Pontiac, as the head of the confederation, had the seat of honor and beside him sat the aged Sagamore, Ick-toosh. In the grim circle were Strong Bear, the Chippewa Chief; Tegachook, the Miami Chief; Wassebo, the celebrated leader of the Wyandots; Black Beaver, chief of the Pottowatomies; Red Bird, of the Mississagas; Torn Face, a great Shawnee warrior; Powato, of the Ottagamies, and Showgreel, of the Winnebagoes, as well as other noted sub-chiefs. The pipes were lighted and the council began. Pontiac briefly introduced the Huron courier and bid him repeat for the ears of the

assembled chiefs the message of the French general.

Even as the Huron spoke the scouts of the Ottawawas began to come in with reports confirming the intelligence of the French Governor. These dark figures glided up beside Pontiac and whispered their tidings into his ear. They reported that a great company of riflemen was advancing from the south, with Fort Duquesne at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers, as their obvious objective. Pontiac questioned each scout sharply.

"Red Coats?" he asked of one.

The scout shook his head in a vigorous negative.

"Deerskin and long shooting sticks," was his answer, indicating that the advancing troops were not of the kind who had met signal disaster under the unfortunate Braddock, but were Colonial riflemen.

When the Huron's speech had ended he sat down and began to smoke stolidly. For a few minutes no one spoke. Then Strong Bear arose and addressed his associates.

"When the dog of an Iroquois was armed with the long shooting stick by his friends of the English," he said, "did he not slay the Algonquin? Were not the people of the lakes his helpless vic-

tims? Who was the brother to the man of the lakes? Who put the rifle into his hands and made him a warrior fit to cope with the men of the long house of the Iroquois? Strong Bear doesn't forget Honnondio, who was his friend, asks help from his red brother whom he has helped. Strong Bear would dig up the war-hatchet against the English foes of the men of the lakes. I have spoken."

As the Chippewa resumed his seat, all eyes were turned upon the Sagamore Ick-toosh. The old man began to speak slowly.

"Last night," he said, "Ick-toosh spoke to his brothers. The words of Ick-toosh were feathers on the air for the storm has blown them away. The words of Ick-toosh lay upon the ground and the snow has covered them up. So Ick-toosh, the aged man, the man of many councils, must make new words for the ears of his brothers. Listen to his words. The men of the lakes are at peace. Their long houses have store in plenty. Their woods are full of beaver and deer. They may range the forest unmolested. Today Honnondio is the white brother of the men of the lakes, but every day his people come more and more. Every moon their great ships bear them over the big water. They have girdled the men of the lakes in with a belt of strong houses. When

their need presses and their strong houses are so many that the game shall be driven from the forests, what shall the men of the lakes do? Will they give up their tomahawks and be women working in the fields? Will they be slaves on the great plantations of the whites? Oh, Manitu the mighty, has set white nation against white nation and they will destroy each other, if the red man stand aside. Let the war-hatchet stay buried. The quarrel of the white nation is not the quarrel of the red man. Let not my brothers lose their scalps in the quarrel of the pale-faces."

The words of Ick-toosh always carried great weight among his people, and several of the warriors nodded their heads in approval of his council. But the younger men turned their eyes anxiously toward the face of the head of the confederacy. Pontiac did not disappoint them.

"The words of Ick-toosh were not feathers that the wind blew away," he began, "nor were they covered by the snow. Yesterday they were good words. If the war between the white nations were a war afar off, the men of the lakes need take no thought. But the English come. They come into the country of Pontiac. Have they sent their messengers for permission to come into the country of Pontiac? Do they come with belts of wampum, to smoke the pipe of peace? No!

They come as their red coats come, with their knives in their belts and their shooting sticks in their hands, to take the strong houses of the Indians' friends and slay the men of the lakes."

The chief's cold eyes settled on Strong Bear as he began a crafty personal appeal.

"Where," he asked, "is the scalp lock of Red Elk, the brave blood brother of Strong Bear? Why was his skull red when we prepared him for burial? Did the English spare Red Elk and his squaw and his papoose?"

His glance shifted to the Wyandot chief.

"Why sits my brother Wassebo silent," he asked? "Was it in Wassebo's heart or the heart of his father that the red coat's bullet sank? Has Wassebo no word to say? Is his tomahawk asleep in his hand when he hears the name of the English?"

Again his glance turned and singled out the scarred features of Torn Face.

"Was it the claw of a bear that ripped the cheek of my Shawnee brother?" he asked. "Was it the horn of an elk that laid his cheekbone bare? Or was it the knife of an English warrior?"

"Brothers! Have we the spirit of the ancient Lenape? Are we a strong people, or are we women? Are we wild beasts of the forest that know not how to repay kindness with kindness,

and injury with vengeance? The great chief of the French is the brother of Pontiac. He had been the brother and the protector of the men of the lakes. Shall his foes overcome him and we sit idle in our long houses? Wherever the English have been they have slain our people and wasted our lands, and stolen our furs. They come into the door of our house unbidden. Let them be driven back crying like whipped dogs! Let their scalps be the spoil of our young men! Dig up the hatchet! Pontiac speaks for war!"

The circle had been shifting uneasily under the white-hot words of the old warrior. As he drew his blanket around him Wassebo stood up and threw his to the ground. His black eyes were blazing and the nervous grip of his hand swung his tomahawk before him. Crouching his body so that he leaned forward from the hips, and stepping with flexed knees he began a slow dance around the fire.

"Yow-wee!" he sang as he danced.

"Yow-wee is the war-yell of Wassebo.

"Wassebo thirsts for blood.

"Wassebo would tear the pale heart out of the Englishman.

"Wassebo would bury his tomahawk in the white skull of his enemy."

One by one the other braves arose and fol-

lowed him in his dance; Great Bear first, Torn Face next, and one by one the others until the wild war-yell resounded through the black forest corridors, as the red men pranced with ever increasing frenzy, their naked bodies glistening, their tomahawks brandished.

Squaws and children swarmed out of the cabins to see what was going on. They beheld the ring of braves circling around two figures:—one, seated, was that of Ick-toosh, his eyes somber, the other, standing, was Pontiac, who smiled with fierce joy.

When the war dance was over at last, Pontiac began his military preparations. His plan was to repeat, if possible, the maneuver against General Braddock, and he purposed an immediate departure attended by all the braves within call. The village was to be left in charge of the youths who had not attained a warrior's dignity.

Rushing Water, dull-brained and heavy-hearted from grief, was summoned to the council fire to receive the commands of Pontiac.

"My son," said the old chief, laying a heavy hand upon his shoulder. "This evening shall see my warriors on the warpath. You shall remain to guard the village. It is a warrior's training. Take these older boys and send them as scouts into the woods, so that none shall approach you

without knowledge. If help be needed, send your fleetest runner on my trail to the south. Meanwhile, let Outanie be placed in her narrow house like the daughter of chiefs and the wife of a chief. Farewell, my son."

Rushing Water returned to attend to the obsequies of his mother. She was laid at rest during the day with honors unusual for a squaw. Furs and corn were buried with her, while the chiefs of the Six Nations stood around mourning with the stricken father and son.

The funeral over, Pontiac addressed himself to the work ahead of him. Dried deer meat, cut in strips, and little bags of corn constituted the meager commissariat. Before darkness fell the stern, silent procession left the village and plunged into the wild.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GATHERING STORM

It was a dreary autumn and winter for Rushing Water. The gift of the rifle had been made to a gay-hearted boy; the charge of the village had been entrusted to a man, for sorrow, sudden and deep, tempers the spirit as fire does the iron. Although there were older lads than he among the little company Pontiac had left to guard the cabins of the Ottawawas, the crafty old chief had made a wise choice. He soon showed his mettle. Among the braves who had gone with the war party was Ish-to-ba, who some years before had called Rushing Water "Squaw girl," and had suffered for the taunt. He was the youngest and least experienced of the warriors and after the fall of Duquesne, Pontiac sent him back to the village to inform Rushing Water that the Ottawawa braves were journeying eastward to join Montcalm in the Adirondacks. Puffed up with pride over his new dignities, Ish-to-ba, who had never forgiven Rushing Water the beating he had

received at the hands of the younger lad, assumed command as the right of a warrior. Rushing Water found that his instructions to some of the other boys had been countermanded one morning.

Looking toward the cabin of Ish-to-ba he saw that young buck sitting at the door, a crowd of lads gathered round him to listen to his story of the expedition. Ish-to-ba had stuffed his pipe with kinnikinnie and was boasting of his exploits.

"With my shooting stick," he said grandly, "I slew three English dogs. Then alone I grappled with one of the white chiefs and my knife found his heart."

"But where are their scalps?" asked Gray Hawk, one of the older lads.

Ish-to-ba smoked with great dignity.

"Boys must not question warriors," he said.

"Gray Hawk," said Rushing Water quietly, "this was your hour to watch by the creek. Why are you in the camp?"

The lad turned on his questioner.

"Ish-to-ba bade me come in and hear his war talk," he answered.

Two disconcerting dark brown eyes surveyed the young warrior coldly from under level brows. Ish-to-ba returned the stare with a sneer.

"You are not well brought up, boy," he said, "or you would not interrupt a warrior."

"Is Pontiac dead, then?" Rushing Water asked. "And have the chiefs elected a new king whose name is Ish-to-ba?"

The buck sprang to his feet. He was a splendid savage, tall, well-muscled and agile. As he advanced toward Rushing Water his wide nostrils quivered with cruel rage and his black eyes glowed with dull hate. His fingers gripped a stout birch wand.

"Dog of a white-heart!" he growled, "I must teach you a lesson. Bare your back till I beat you!"

Rushing Water bared his back but not for a beating. As he flung his blanket from him it became evident that Ish-to-ba had not much advantage over him save in bulk. Rushing Water's magnificent body was as supple as a sapling and as tough as a hickory branch. The long low muscles rippled under his smooth skin as he bent his arms. Ish-to-ba raised his stick, but before it fell fingers of steel clasped the descending wrist and the buck staggered under the impact of a clenched fist full on his brow. With a guttural imprecation Ish-to-ba dropped his stick and plucked a knife from his belt. Quick as was the sweep of his hand, it was not more quick than that of

Rushing Water. For a second the two youths faced each other, eye to eye. Then the buck began to circle round his opponent, uttering short, yelping ejaculations. His feet rose and fell in a cat-like tread. Rushing Water, turning on his heel awaited the onset in silence. At last came the spring and the thrust, and the swift blade of Ish-to-ba sought the heart of his enemy. It broke on the interposed blade of Rushing Water, who swerved and swung in a lightning swoop, encircling the body of Ish-to-ba with his left arm, while the flexed right elbow pressed into the buck's throttle. The broken knife fell from Ish-to-ba's hand, which sprang to his throat to release the choking grip. He bent his great muscles to free himself, but the embrace into which he had been entrapped was like a tightening steel band, and at last with tongue and eyeballs protruding he gave way. He fell on his back, Rushing Water on top of him.

"Listen, Ish-to-ba," panted Rushing Water, his arm still pressed like a bar on his enemy's throat, "for the next time I shall kill you. This village obeys me. While you are in it you obey me. Shall it be so?"

He released the pressure slightly. Ish-to-ba gasped for breath. When he could speak he said:

"Have your way! I shall not trouble you again until the braves return."

Rushing Water sprang to his feet.

"It is well," he said. "Gray Hawk, to your post!" he commanded sharply and the lad did not tarry.

Ish-to-ba gave no trouble after that. He remained in the village sullen and glowering, but the authority of Rushing Water was not questioned and his dispositions were carried out to the letter. Reports from the front were not encouraging. The French and their Indian allies had some success at first in Eastern New York, but early in the following year the tide of war turned and one by one the French posts fell, until at last Montcalm died on the Plains of Abraham, and the French empire of the west was broken forever.

Pontiac returned to his village in a bitter and vengeful mood. He found his stronghold prosperous, but his future and that of his people gave him much concern. His old companions in arms were gone, the dominant whites were now a strange people, and not overfriendly. They traversed his lands without permission, they strengthened the posts they had taken from the French and built new outposts on the creeks and the lakes. There were still French in considerable numbers among the hunters and traders, expeditions from

New Orleans in the far south ascended the Mississippi and its tributaries to barter for furs and the famous *couriers du bois* plied their trade on the lakes, but the empire was in English hands, the military forces were composed of hostile, contemptuous men, and little heed was paid to the pride and property rights of the Ottawawa chief. He tried to impress his power on the strangers at the onset but failed. When Major Rogers journeyed westward to take charge of Detroit, Pontiac, with a hundred braves, met him at the Allegheny.

"You come into the empire of Pontiac," he said to the English officer, "yet no one has asked Pontiac's permission."

The Englishman turned to the interpreter.

"Say to the chief," he said, "that I go to Detroit on my master's business; that the King of the English is lord over all the land."

The interpreter translated.

"Till the next sun," said Pontiac, "I stand in your path. Then we shall see."

All that night the chief pondered. From his tepee he could see the camp-fires of the English and his experienced eyes noted the confident and efficient manner in which the colonials took precautions against surprise. They were too strong for

him. In the morning he hid his deep chagrin behind an impassive countenance.

"My white brother," he said, "has safe conduct through the lands of Pontiac. My young men shall escort him to Detroit."

So the months passed, and what they held added to the rage in the heart of the chief. His new neighbors had none of the winning courtesy of his old white allies. Complaint after complaint came to him from the people of his confederacy of insult and outrage. The fire smoldered in the hearts of the chief and his followers. Pontiac kept much to his tent, silent and thoughtful. A dozen times his younger men called on him to dig up the hatchet but he restrained them.

"Not yet; not yet!" he would say with uplifted hand.

But on tablets of birch he marked down each tale of oppression.

"The account grows long," he said grimly one day to Rushing Water.

"Too long, father!" exclaimed the young man impatiently.

Pontiac surveyed him shrewdly.

"It shall be settled in time, my son," he said. "Settled to the last mark. You shall have a warrior's work cut out for you."

He began to store the supply houses with corn

not only from his own fields but from those of other tribes. Messengers were sent to trusted friends at Quebec and returned laden with powder and bullets. When his supply of furs gave out Pontiac pledged the fruit of future hunts. He gave to the daring French traders notes on his future wealth, rudely written on birch bark tablets and signed with his totem, the otter.

In Detroit and Fort Pitt, as Duquesne had been renamed, and in the other posts and settlements, the conquering English slept in fancied security. But in the wild the storm was brewing.

CHAPTER IX

THE MEETING ON THE ISLE

The warm ray of the April sun, broken into countless flashes of gold on the rippling surface of Lake Erie, washed the shores of the beautiful island which the Indians called Pelee. Thickly covered with somber pine, that shaded the tender green of the fresh grass, it lay like an emerald on the breast of the lake. Toward this isle one morning in the early spring of 1763, hundreds of long canoes made their way. They came from all directions, and as their paddles flashed and fell the circling wild birds rose screaming in the air, frightened by the unwonted presence of so many human beings on these lonely waters.

It was in this secluded spot that Pontiac had determined to hold his great war council. As the warriors arrived he welcomed them gravely to a seat round the great council fire. They came from many nations. The remnants of the Algonquin tribes of the northeast were there. The Miami warriors were present. The Obigibways sent

their strongest chiefs. The Kaskaskias, hereditary foes of the Ottawawas, buried their old animosities and came to smoke the pipe of peace with the great chief of their enemies. Tall and stately the savage Hurons took their place in the wide circle. The Illinois tribes mingled with the warriors of the Ottawawa confederacy.

The sun was four hours high in the eastern sky when the pow-wow began. Ick-toosh, the old Sagamore, was dead and in that dark assemblage there was now no voice for peace. The rapid settlement of the Ohio country which had followed upon the English conquest, had spread a feeling of apprehension and resentment among all the western tribes, and the haughty demeanor of the new settlers quickened a hostility which many cases of actual insult and outrage fanned into flame. The faces upon which Pontiac's eyes rested were stern, eager faces, whose habitual gravity gave way to quick flashes of approval at every suggestion of war and bloodshed. Pontiac opened the council.

"My red brothers," he said, "you are welcome at the council fire of Pontiac. We are men of the forest and lake, warriors and the sons of warriors. East of us there is a great water; west of us there is a great water; beyond, the highest of the high hills. By these waters the great spirit marked out the hunting grounds of the red race. Beyond

these waters are other lands which Manitu gave to the white peoples to dwell in. But from where the sun rises in the sea to where the sun sets in the sea is many times the flight of an eagle, and by the gift of the great spirit these are the red man's lands. There are traditions among our people, talks which the shore Indian has made to his inland neighbors, that when first the pale-face came the red man treated him as a brother cast up by the sea. He was given fish and maize for his food, and furs for a clothing for his body. But he came in greater numbers and waxed arrogant and he took our women and slew our men and made warriors drunk with his fire water, and robbed them of their furs and lands with force and false words. What say you to this, my brothers?"

Strong-left-hand, the gigantic chief of the Kaskaskias let fall his blanket and folding his arms upon his breast gazed round the circle. One ear had been shorn from his skull and a great white seam lay across his forehead.

"My brothers," he said, touching the seam on his brow, "this cleft was made by the tomahawk of an Ottawawa warrior. The scalp knife of Pontiac shore my ear from the skull, and there has been blood feud between us. But because Pontiac is a great chief of the red man's blood, and wise as a

serpent and bold as an eagle, I have come to smoke with him the pipe of peace, to say to the red people that the war-hatchet has been buried between us and to pledge my tomahawk to his cause against the English invaders of our home. We are not few who rightfully own this forest and these waters, but we dwell by many smokes. We are not women but warriors. We are not slaves but free men. The feud of the Kaskaskia has a call in my ears which my spirit answers, but louder is the call of the red man's blood which the Kaskaskia shares with many nations. Among the warriors let there be peace. Between them and the pale-face let there be war. Let their men die under the tomahawk. Let their women die and their children die, so that this side of the great water there may be no more English dogs. I have spoken."

One after another the leading chiefs added their voices to the cry for war. One after another with fiery words they inflamed their own hearts and those of their companions.

Among the young men gathered round, none drank in more eagerly the tale of the Indian wrongs than Rushing Water, and in no heart did the cry for vengeance more loudly ring. He looked with eager eyes upon these chiefs, most of them warriors of renown, tales of whose exploits

had been told many times around the camp fires. Gathered together there, they seemed to him to represent an irresistible force. To the sanguine spirit of youth there could be but one outcome of the proposed war, one issue to the wild onset of all these redoubtable warriors striking for a cause dearest to the Indian's heart. He had seen the war dance many times but the wild gyration which was to end this council was such as no man had ever seen before.

When the frenzy of the warriors had been excited to the highest pitch by the recounted wrongs of their people, and Pontiac had lashed them into an insane fury with words of fire, they threw aside their blankets, and screaming their wild war-whoops and brandishing knives and tomahawks pranced demoniacally in the huge circle. There were three hundred maddened braves in that whirlblast of hate. Ominous was their dance for the peace of the English settlements, for those three hundred represented full six thousand warriors who within a few hours would be speeding through the forest on deadly business. They danced until exhausted and slept where they fell on the ground, awakening only for the great feast that the Ottawawa chief had prepared for his guests. The next morning found them again at council, this time gravely considering the plans of

war which Pontiac laid before them. With his tomahawk the old chief drew a rude map upon the ground.

"Here," he said, marking a cross, "is the fort they call Detroit. There shall I assail with a thousand warriors. Here is Michilimakinak. Let my brother the Obigibway chief take care of the settlement there. Strong Bear shall lead the party to the settlement the French call Le Boeuf. My brother the Kaskaskia chief shall scourge the shores of the great lake of Michigan. And here at Venango, where the French Creek joins the Allegheny, I shall expect my son, Rushing Water, to do a warrior's work at the head of my young men."

Rushing Water, who had been eagerly listening, brightened at these words and hurriedly began to recruit his company. Eighty warriors were assigned him for his work. All preparations having been made, the council broke up, the chiefs hurrying to rally their tribes before the sun set. The Ottawawa flotilla was on the lake. It divided into two parts, one great fleet, under Pontiac, proceeding to the westward, and ten long canoes, each with a company of eight men, speeding toward the east. In command of the smaller party was Rushing Water, his scalp shaven save for the single scalp lock with its eagle feather, and his face and

body hideously daubed with the red and yellow of his war paint.

Pontiac's long-buried hatchet was out of the ground at last. Within three days the war yells of his followers were shrieking around the smaller and less protected settlements. The wrath of the old chief was loose like a living flame lashing the far northwest frontier in the last desperate struggle of the lake Indians against encompassing destiny.

CHAPTER X

BAGGATAWAY

Thrust out into the wilderness the rude outpost of a white civilization at Venango was tucked cozily into a bend of the Allegheny stream, some miles about Fort Pitt. The French had established the settlement close to the mouth of French Creek, a waterway much used by the Indians. Although the cross of St. George now fluttered in the breeze above the block house, and the garrison of twenty soldiers stationed at the post were British regulars, there still remained a few French families among the forty who composed the settlement. Some of these had already established permanent homes outside the palisades, and within, while others were temporary sojourners at the post—traders from Quebec or from distant New Orleans. The new families were for the most part transplanted Virginia Colonials, between whom and the French settlers there had already grown up a community feeling that was gradually overcoming the rancors of the recent war. The

young English officers visited the homes of the French and found the company of the vivacious French girls vastly agreeable. Small as was the settlement, and remote from the civilization of which it was an offshoot, it had its social spirit and its pleasant hours.

The log houses were in some cases more than mere cabins, and there were little parlors tastefully decorated and showing some of the luxury of the old world. Traders ascending the river brought French journals from New Orleans, and although these were many months old when they reached Venango, they carried some of the gossip and much of the feeling of the old world to its distant daughter in the far-off valley of the Allegheny.

The sight of Indians was not strange to these frontier folk. In the old days there had been a *camaraderie* between the French and the neighboring warriors, and even now braves in couples or in dozens were frequent visitors. Sometimes even a hunting party of considerable size camped outside the palisade and offered pelts for barter. Prosperous, happy little Venango lay in the smiling Allegheny Valley, on a beautiful morning in early May when all the world seemed at peace. At sunrise the sentry reported to Ensign Gadwell that two Indians were at the gates. He was ordered

to admit them and they soon were standing before the British officer, a brace of young bucks, one of whom addressed the Englishman in French. The soldier shook his head.

"Call that trader from New Orleans—what's his name?—Ah, yes, Monsieur de Boncour," he said to an orderly. The Indians stood like stone figures until the French trader entered the room. He was a powerful man of middle age with dancing black eyes and a bold brow, clothed in fringed hunting jacket and leggings.

"Ah, my friend," saluted young Gadwell, "I am in difficulties. I speak neither French nor any Indian tongue, and here are two savages who would have words with me. May I ask aid?"

"Certainly, Monsieur," smiled the trader. Then turning to the dark visitors he asked in French:

"What would my red brothers have from the white chief?"

"We are of Pontiac's people," answered the taller of the two Indians. "We have two parties who would play baggataway which the French call La Crosse. We would ask the white chief for permission to use the clearing outside the walls for our game."

De Boncour translated the request to the officer who replied smilingly:

"Ah, I have heard of this game. It will furnish sport. Tell them they have our permission and welcome. When do they play?"

"When do you play?" asked the trader in French. The brave addressed pointed to a spot in the sky midway between the meridian and the western horizon.

"About four in the afternoon," explained de Boncour to the Englishman. Then addressing the Indians again he said:

"The white chief gives permission to the young warriors to play in the clearing."

They bowed gravely and signified that they were ready to depart. The sentry escorted them to the gate, opened it and let them out. They walked slowly to a long canoe lying on the river bank, pushed it into the water, jumped in and paddled up the stream.

The trader, left alone with the officer, turned to him with a look of uneasiness in his eyes.

"I am as you know but two days in the post, Monsieur," he said. "Tell me, are the Indians friendly?"

"No bother at all," said Gadwell easily. "In fact they haven't even ventured near us these three weeks."

The shadow deepened in de Boncour's eyes.

"By no means a good sign, that, if Monsieur

will pardon me," he said gravely. "There was something I liked little about the look of those two. Might I suggest to Monsieur that he order all his people to keep within the palisade, while these savages are close by?"

"Ah, nonsense, my friend," laughed the Englishman. "I was just thinking what a capital diversion it would be for us all to go out and watch their game. These two seemed friendly enough."

"I am twenty years a woodsman," said de Boncour, "so you will pardon me for saying it would be quite foolhardy to go without the walls. Watch their play from within, Monsieur!"

The officer laughed again. "Ah, Miss Boncour!" he called. "What think you of this timid uncle of yours, who would spoil the beauty of our glorious spring morning with grisly forebodings, because a handful of savages wish to play ball in our clearing?"

The girl thus greeted had opened the door of one of the log dwellings and stepped out on the porch. She laughed back a gay greeting to the young officer, and, vaulting the low balustrade of the porch with the lightness and grace of a fawn, she danced across the sward and caught her uncle round the neck. Then she turned and bowed demurely to his companion.

"Good morning, Meestaire Gad-weel," she said

in slow, unaccustomed English. "Mon oncle—deed you say heem timid?" She laughed heartily at the idea. The young soldier joined in her mirth, his eyes full of frank admiration. He noted the deep gladness of her great brown eyes, the rose flush beneath the creamy tan of her rounded cheeks, the silky richness of her chestnut hair, and the cherry red of her lips parted in the frank gay-hearted laughter of seventeen. Clothed in a dainty habit of deerskin, whose brown tints harmonized with hair and eyes and sun-kissed cheeks, she might well stir to quickened throbbing a less impressionable heart than that of the young officer.

"Not for himself, do I mean," said Gadwell, "but for the prize in his charge, and by gad, Miss Boncour, were I in charge of such a treasure, I would be uneasy too."

De Boncour had taken no part in this pleasantry. The experienced wood-rover was studying an oncoming fleet of long canoes just turning a bend in the river. A rather grim smile played upon his lips as he counted the boats and made a rough estimate of the number of warriors they carried.

"Rather more than a handful there, Monsieur," he said quietly.

Gadwell, who in his present pleasant occupa-

tion of smiling into the eyes of Valerie de Boncour, had forgotten the Indians, turned with a start and let his eyes rest upon the approaching canoes. For an instant his face grew serious.

"How many do you count, my friend?" he said.

"There are eighty braves in that party," de Boncour answered.

"And does that presage difficulties?" asked the young officer.

"Not necessarily," the Frenchman answered, "but it justifies precautions. I renew my most respectful suggestion that all our people keep within the palisade until this party shall have left."

The Indians pulled their shallops out on the bank and proceeded to the edge of the clearing where they made a camp fire. This business having been attended to, the morning meal was prepared. The soldiers, watching them curiously, beheld only a party of young men seemingly bent upon a day's frolic. Some of them stood by the fires and smoked, others ran short foot races, while still others in small groups sauntered up and down before the protecting walls. The mid-day meal was cooked and eaten, the early afternoon passed slowly, and the hour of four came at last.

Then was a stir in the Indian camp. A small group of Indians brought four fresh-cut saplings

out of the woods and set a pair of these up at opposite ends of the clearing. Twenty of the braves threw off their blankets and their hunting shirts, and, naked to the waist, divided into two parties, one at either end of the field. Each of these braves held in his hand a racket with a handle five feet in length, bent at one end like a shepherd's crook, the bight of which was netted with thongs of deer hide. From the edge of the marked-out field a young buck threw a ball. Like a flash the opposing teams made for it, and the game was on.

CHAPTER XI

THE BLOOD CALL

Where the tossed ball fell in the middle of the oblong field, there was a moment's wild confusion, above which the rackets swung back and forth. At last the ball rose from the center of the struggling braves in a long flight toward the northerly goal. Instantly the knot of young Indians broke and darted in pursuit, while the goal keeper crossed his racket in front of his body and crouched down to protect his wickets. One of the young bucks soon emerged from the cluster, however, as his comrades turned to interfere with their opponents, and his quick racket scooped the ball from the sod. With a hurried swing he flung it toward the south. It seemed like a long, wild throw. The ball soared over the palisade and landed within the post. Half a dozen young braves scrambled in through the open gate before the sentry could interpose his rifle, and catching the ball as it lay on the ground one of them tossed it carelessly back over the paling. Then the

Indians went out again and resumed the play.

To the white spectators the game afforded excitement and pleasure. Nearly all the residents of the settlement had gathered along the palisade to gaze at the contending teams over the log breast-works. The women applauded each swift flight and throw, and among the men wagers were made upon the outcome. Soon all suspicion was dissipated and only de Boncour, noting the frequency with which wildly thrown balls came over the stockade to be retrieved each time by a larger group of players, nursed a vague suspicion in his heart and kept his hand on his rifle.

"See that young runner on the southerly team," said Gadwell to him. "He seems unlike all his companions."

The eyes of the little party sought out the brave indicated. He was easily distinguishable from the rest not only because of the superior swiftness and grace of his movements, but because of the high, clear laughter that came from him from time to time and that sounded strangely among the fierce ejaculations of his companions.

"He is a very handsome Indian," said Valerie with prompt decision. Du Boncour's eyes followed him curiously.

"That is very strange," murmured the Frenchman. "He plays more like a white man than a

savage. Ha!—" The exclamation was caused by another flight of the ball over the stockade. This time there was a general rush to retrieve it, not only the players entering the enclosure, but a general movement taking place among the Indian spectators.

"In heaven's name Gadwell, get your men together, it is a surprise," the Frenchman cried to the young commandant. In confirmation of his words a scream of terror arose from the gate through which the whole Indian band was now pouring into the enclosure, and like an echo, wild and shrill, and ringing with a fierce blood lust, the yelping war-whoop tore the evening peace.

Gadwell, alert at last, although cold at heart with the realization of his irretrievable blunder, snapped out quick, short orders trying to rally his scattered little forces. He was not given time even to recognize how futile was this effort, for an Indian bullet crashed into his skull and he fell forward.

The scene that followed was one of horrid butchery. Some of the men managed to reach their rifles and bringing down a few of their red foes before they, themselves, fell. But the surprise had been too complete, the attack too sudden and unexpected, and only one man in all that little white company fought with a cool brain and

a steady eye. De Boncour, kneeling on the ground, fired and reloaded and fired again, each bullet finding its mark until his powder-horn was empty. Then with his rifle clubbed and swinging like a flail, he leaped out among the massed Indians. Two men he added to his account before he sank under the rain of hatchets and the scalp was torn from his skull. The men had now all fallen and the red fury of the enraged warriors began to wreak its infernal way upon the women and children. Old women and young girls huddled together, were dragged from among their companions half dead with terror, their long hair twisted in the sinewy grip of a brave, and the scalp knife driven into their skulls, ere they fell to the ground. Little children were tomahawked as they clung to their mothers' skirts, or ran screaming, seeking escape where there was no escape.

In the midst of all this carnage stood one, still, silent figure. Rushing Water had been foremost in the onset, had fought with a gay impetuosity while there was fighting to do, but now that the white men were huddled corpses, and knife and tomahawk were doing wild and bloody work among defenseless women and little children, he stopped, wide-eyed with horror, sick with repugnance. Few of his companions engrossed in their cruel exercise, noted the strange conduct of the

chief of their party, but those who did so marveled. Ish-to-ba was among these latter.

"Man-who-walks-with-his-toes-turned-out," he yelled as he ran by, "does the sight of blood sicken your white heart?"

The taunt attracted Rushing Water's attention. He saw a little figure clothed in fringed deerskin, and with long, chestnut hair floating on the breeze, in swift flight through the open gate of the stockade, and behind her in full pursuit, with bloody tomahawks waving, were Ish-to-ba and another brave. The sight electrified him and with a spring he darted after them. The white girl was fleet-footed and she almost reached the river bank before her pursuers overtook her. Indeed, she would have made good her escape had she not tripped and fallen headlong over a broken bough in her path. With a yell of fierce exultation, Ish-to-ba swooped down upon her. Catching her hair close to her skull, he dragged her to her knees.

Rushing Water saw the rarely beautiful face of the girl uplifted in appeal and her hands clasped in supplication. An instant later his grip was on Ish-to-ba's shoulder and that surprised warrior found himself spun round like a top. The girl's hair had slipped from his relaxed fingers, but with the tomahawk whose blow he had intended for the delicate girl, he delivered a fierce sweep at Rush-

ing Water's brow. The hatchet hissed through empty air. Swift as a serpent, Rushing Water had swerved from its descending path.

" 'Tis the third time, Ish-to-ba," he said grimly through his set teeth, as he buried his hunting knife to the hilt in the heart of the Indian.

Young War Eagle, who had beheld this scene in a very paralysis of amazement, now woke to furious, vengeful life, and sprang with a scream at Rushing Water, his war-hatchet upraised. But the young chief was too quick for him and dexterously avoiding his onset, felled him with a sweep of the tomahawk that smote like a thunderbolt.

Yelps of surprise and fury came now from the direction of the fort, and Rushing Water lifting his eyes saw the whole Indian band streaming down upon him. He turned and looked for the girl whom he had rescued. She had taken advantage of his intervention to gain the river bank and was now pushing off from the shore in one of the long canoes. Picking up his rifle which he had dropped in the encounter with the two Indians, Rushing Water leaped into the river. Its current was rapidly bearing the canoe down stream. Holding the rifle above his head with one hand, the young chief swam rapidly in pursuit of the boat. Twenty vigorous strokes brought him alongside.

He thrust his rifle into the canoe, which he guided to a little islet in the middle of the river.

The Indians had gathered at the bank and were discharging their rifles at him, the bullets hitting the water near by with a vicious spat. Steadying the boat on the beach, Rushing Water clambered into it and then with the quick and powerful thrust of his paddle, sent it speeding down the stream. Half a dozen boats were already in pursuit, but the skill and strength of Rushing Water with the paddle were long well known among his companions, and a note of furious disappointment was already mingling with their cries of rage and vengeance. Their riflemen still fired upon him and Rushing Water warily watching them over his shoulder as his bark shot down the stream under the strong, steady thrust of his paddle, reached forward from time to time to crush down into the bottom of the boat with his left hand, the frightened girl who sat before him. One bullet, better aimed than the rest, tore the smooth skin of his shoulder but that was his narrowest escape.

The steady swinging of his paddle never ceased. Smaller and smaller in his sight grew the pursuing canoes, and fainter and fainter the cries, until at last the crimson river grew dull brown and the night fell upon them.

CHAPTER XII

UNDERSTANDING

Arrow-fleet, on the swift running breast of the dark Allegheny, that fugitive canoe sped its southward course. Like the steady beat of a piece of machinery, Rushing Water's paddle rose and fell, rose and fell, unceasing through the dark hours. On a rug of bear skin at the bottom of the bark, crouched the quivering figure of Valerie. With eager, straining eyes that sought to read through the gloom some hint as to her fate, the girl watched the dark figure in the stern of the canoe. She could not see his features in the gloom and he did not speak to her, but as the hours wore on and the beating paddle rose and fell without cessation, something in the swift certainty of the brave's rhythmical sweep of his cedar blade began to allay the wild terror in her heart.

She saw the lantern's dim glimmer at Fort Pitt, as their swift canoe, under the combined compulsion of the paddle thrust and the hurried current of the river in flood, swept round the bend and

out upon the Ohio's wider reaches. For a while she hoped against hope that her captor would land her there, for she knew that there were white men garrisoning that post. The somber waterman, however, did not even glance at the twinkling lights but held his rapid course. The sky was overcast, only showing pale patches where the moon was breaking through. A sudden rift let down a flood of wan light upon the river, and an English sentry, pacing the shore, caught a flashing glimpse of a spectral bark, propelled by a ghostly oarsman, before the torn cloud curtains were drawn together and darkness blotted out the apparition. He awakened a non-commissioned officer and reported, but the sleepy subaltern cursed him for a superstitious, drunken wight whose fancy was playing him tricks, and returned to his interrupted slumber.

So Valerie beheld with dying hope the lights of the fortress fading from her view. Her mind was busy with speculations. Why had this young brave saved her? Why had he killed his two companions in her behalf? What was the mystery of so amazing an interposition between her and a frightful death? Terror and exhaustion overcame her at last. The soft swish of the river and the steady beat of the paddle were soothing influences, and the little body gradually relaxed

and sank lower and lower on its couch of furs. She slept a troubled sleep. Sobs, deep and violent, shook breast and shoulders. The tender outstretched limbs twitched spasmodically. Now and again a low moan would break from her lips, as the spell of horror cast upon her bright, young spirit by the events of the day struggled for mastery with the soothing influence of slumber. Once she awakened, paralyzed with fear and bathed in cold perspiration, with the consciousness of a presence close to her. She saw her captor standing above her. Before she could scream he had gently placed over her body a blanket of beaver skins. Unconscious of the fact that he had awakened her, he stepped silently back to his seat in the stern, and again she heard the steady beat of his paddle and felt the forward thrust of the canoe. Her leaden eyelids fell and slumber once more possessed her.

The day had broken and the forest was musical with the song of birds, when returning consciousness brought the old horror back to her heart. She was still lying in the canoe, but the boat seemed motionless. Raising her head she saw that it had been pulled out upon the shelving river bank. She looked around for the Indian. He was nowhere to be seen. A new terror came upon her. Fearful as she had been of this savage

in whose power she was, she now felt in her heart the loss of a protector. Something deeper than her reason told her that however mysterious the motives that actuated it, this young Indian's attitude toward her was one of friendliness and protection. Consequently she felt the sense of the new bereavement coupled with the chilling fear of this vast wilderness, which despite its aspect of peace and beauty, held dangers of whose cruel and deadly character she was now only too sensible.

She arose and stood unsteadily on the beach. Her arms and legs were stiff and pain-racked. In the hope of restoring her blood to a normal state of circulation she walked a few hundred paces into the woods, then she stopped with a start. A strange sound had struck upon her ear. Advancing cautiously she came upon an opening among the trees. In its center, face down, lay her captor, his splendid shoulders shaken by violent sobbing. Here was a new amazement. The daughter of a fur trader and the niece of one of the best-known of the French adventurers of the woods, this girl knew something of the Indian character. She was familiar with their stoicism. She knew that their hearts and nerves were steeled against the gentler emotions. Yet here lay a young warrior, who had taken part in a ferocious onset and a

hideous massacre, giving way to some agony of heart in a flood of bitter tears.

Like a garment that is flung aside, all fear fell from her spirit and gratitude for the deed that had rescued her from death mingled now with the young girl's warm sympathy for a suffering human being. Stepping softly to his side she placed her little hand upon his quivering shoulder. At the friendly touch the agitation of his body ceased. He slowly raised himself upon his elbow and looked up from under his wet lashes into her pitying eyes.

It was the first clear vision she had of his face and she noted with surprise the ample forehead and the level brow, the straight, well-modeled nose, so different from the usual flattened nose of the Indian, the firm lips and the cleft chin, and above all the frank friendliness and absolute trustworthiness that shone in the dark brown eyes. A quick joy came upon her spirit. There was bond for her safety in those features. The suddenness and completeness of her relief opened the flood-gates of her soul that had been frozen by despair, and from her own eyes tears came streaming now, as she buried her face in her hands. Slowly Rushing Water rose to his feet. A look of pain and perplexity came over his face.

For a few minutes he stood watching the little weeping figure. Then in his turn he became the comforter, and as she lifted her eyes at the reassuring touch of his hand upon her shoulder, he shook his head slowly and held out to her the hilt of his knife, opening the breast of his hunting shirt and baring his heart as a sign to her that he would place his life in her hands. Like a ray of pale sunshine through an April shower, a wan, bright smile shone through Valerie's tears, as with a negative shake of her little head she refused the proffered knife. Rushing Water thrust it into his belt, looked shrewdly into her face to assure himself her apprehension had vanished, and then, beckoning to her to follow, walked down toward the canoe.

That birch vessel, built to carry eight warriors, had been well stocked for the journey, and the young man drew from it corn and strips of dried deer meat. This, washed down by the river water, served for breakfast. As they were eating Valerie held up a piece of meat in her hand.

"Meat," she said in her own language.

Rushing Water's eyes brightened and he repeated the word after her. She dipped a wooden bowl in the river.

"Eau!" she said, indicating with one finger the clear liquid in the wooden vessel.

Then with a quick smile he pointed to his own breast and exclaimed:

"Eau!"

CHAPTER XIII

ELAN D'EAU

Youth and health make a brave battle of it with hardship and sorrow. Although the loss of her uncle was great grief to her, and the dreadful massacre of which she had been a witness was indelibly stamped upon her memory, Valerie de Boncour began, little by little, to recover from the effects of the one and the other. Now that she no longer feared her companion, the events of her journey began to appeal to her healthy interest and curiosity. Rushing Water was an enigma to her, and what girl of seventeen has not had her curiosity piqued by a mystery, particularly when that mystery entered her life surrounded by every circumstance of romance and was personified in a young man whose physical attractiveness was undeniable?

That there was still danger to be apprehended Rushing Water's precautions made very evident. In the first few days of their flight they subsisted upon such stores of food as had been stocked in

their canoe. Rushing Water made no fires, whose telltale smoke might betray their whereabouts to a searching foe. They traveled for the most part at night, hidden in the woods' covert during the day time. The landing places were selected with the utmost care. River weeds and underbrush were gently pushed aside that the canoe might be hidden among them and that none might be broken to mark the trail. During these early days of the journey Rushing Water spoke little. Although he did not again give way to the emotion of grief in which Valerie had surprised him that first morning, the girl conjectured from the sadness that sat upon his features and was shadowed in his eyes that he was suffering deep distress. Very rarely, when she taught him a word or two in French by associating the word with some concrete example, a smile of understanding would, for an instant, light up his countenance. She found him an apt pupil, however, quick to grasp her meaning, and their journey was yet young when they were able to exchange some few ideas in French. Rushing Water guarded the stores carefully, however. He wished neither to lose the time nor risk the danger of hunting in the field of Pontiac's operations. His own easy success at Venango, coupled with his unshaken confidence in the power of the Indian federation, led him

to expect that the warriors would descend the river in force, and his first object was to speed as fast and as far as possible from those who had been so lately his companions and allies.

So he watched with anxious eyes the diminishing store of parched corn and strips of deer meat, while he listened with all his senses alert for the echoing war-whoop that might betoken the presence of a foe in his vicinity.

The waters upon which they journeyed, now southerly, now westerly, widened as they proceeded. The ever widening reaches of the stream flowed smoothly through dense forests. These were all tender green with the advancing spring, and birds and four-footed things were numerous in their recesses. Often their ghostly approach in the pallid dawn frightened herds of elk and moose from the banks of the river, or sent the wild birds fluttering in frightened flocks. More than once Rushing Water laid his hand on his rifle, but caution restrained him, and he refrained from the tempting target.

But the provision bags were empty at last and they were still in a land where the crash of a rifle might bring the warriors upon them. Another expedient must be found. The wood training of the man stood him in good stead now. Valerie saw him one morning returning to the

canoe in which she was just waking, with a long wand in his hand. That day, as they hid among the trees, he cut a piece of deer-hide into long, thin ribbons, which he slowly and carefully braided into a cord. Then he noted the ends of the thick rod, and exerting his great strength he bent it against his knee. By signs he made her understand that he wished her to fasten the ends of his cord to the extremities of the wand. With a smile of comprehension, she fitted the string to his improvised bow. He bound the ends in securely, and with another piece of deer-skin fashioned an arrow rest. The rest of the day he spent in cutting and trimming arrows. He hardened the points of these over a fire he had built on a rock. When he had finished a dozen of these shafts, he carefully stowed them in the boat with his improvised bow, and then laboriously set to work to cover up his trail. The tree he had chopped down with his war hatchet had been cut from its roots a few inches below the ground. Into the hole Rushing Water thrust the leaves and unused branches. Over them he piled the earth and screened the fresh clay with dried leaves and dead twigs, so artfully placed that even a practised eye would not suspect that they had not fallen as they lay.

The remains of the fire were similarly buried

and covered up. It was evening when this laborious task was at an end. As the man and the girl entered the canoe to resume their journey, Rushing Water's brow was puckered with perplexity. At last his eyes brightened and he reached up and took the lone eagle feather from his scalp-lock. For a minute he looked at it thoughtfully. Then with a sigh and a shrug of his shoulders, he fitted it in the slit he had cut in the butt of one of his arrows. He was discarding his chieftain's badge, and there was a look in his face that showed he knew it was forever. What his future might be, there was no means of his knowing, but the only path that might seem open to an outcast Indian was a lonely life in forests far from those in which his own people dwelt.

Valerie noted the look, and although she could not fathom its cause, she knew intuitively that some pang attended the sacrifice of the feather. Her own eyes grew soft with sympathy. The lonely river was rosy in the light from a scarlet sky, and she was very beautiful in the soft pink glow. Rushing Water, raising his eyes from his work, surprised her glance fixed upon him. A soft blush deepened the glow in her cheeks. The chief flung down his arrow and seizing his paddle thrust it into the river.

Fish, caught while she was still asleep, fur-

nished a breakfast for Valerie the next morning. With his corn and dried meat gone, her protector was compelled to venture another fire by the necessity of cooking fresh food. He had cleaned the fresh-caught fish and was broiling it on the embers when she opened her eyes. After the meal, Rushing Water bade the girl remain by the canoe while he slipped into the woods. At the water's edge where the bank bowed in just below them, a cow moose and her calf were feeding. Valerie, watching, saw Rushing Water glide out of the forest at the other horn of the crescent. His bow and arrow were in his hand. She saw him fit the shaft to the bow. Then slowly he drew the string upon which the arrow butt rested across his body and back to his right shoulder, his left hand gripping the bent bow in the middle. The string was released and the arrow sped. The marksmanship was perfect. The calf, pierced just back of the shoulder, staggered and fell. The cow lifted a frightened head, snuffed the morning air, and plunged into the woods.

Rushing Water killed the wounded calf with his knife and retrieved the arrow. Swiftly and deftly he skinned the game and quartered it. The meat served for the noon and evening meals, and provided a store against the morrow. The following day Rushing Water managed to bring down

a wild duck, which not only served as food but furnished him with feathers for his other arrows. That evening as they prepared for their nocturnal voyage, Valerie smilingly pointed her finger at her companion.

"*Eau!*" she said.

The young man glanced at the river and smiled.

"*Elan,*" said Valerie, still pointing at him.

"*Elan d'Eau.*"

In her eagerness she leaned forward and there fell from the bosom of her jacket a little golden crucifix, the chain of which encircled her neck. As the sunlight glinted upon it, Rushing Water started, his eyes alight with curiosity.

"Totem!" he said pointing at the glittering symbol which lay upon her breast.

She took the cross in her hand.

"Ah!" she said, "the cross."

"The cross," the chief repeated.

Then he paddled out into the dusk, his face very thoughtful.

They were six days on their journey now and Rushing Water's vigilance began to relax. Although he still deemed it prudent to travel by night, he was less careful in covering his trail. Valerie was losing her fear of the wilderness when she received a sudden notice that its dangers were still real and close at hand. Beaching his

bark one morning, Rushing Water made the usual preparations for sleep. His canoe hidden, he advanced into the woods, prepared the morning meal, and, after it had been eaten, threw himself on the ground for rest. The girl, who had slept during the night journey, sat beside him, on guard. Almost instantly Rushing Water slept. The morning sun slowly mounted, flecking with gold the carpeted forest. The hum of birds and insects made drowsy music. Save for this the woods seemed silent, lonely, void of human life.

All fear lulled, Valerie watched the brilliant wild flowers, and dreamed of her far-away home. Suddenly, as her glance lifted to follow the flight of a yellow butterfly, a cold chill shot through her breast. From behind a tree trunk a rifle protruded, and above it glistened a pair of cruel, black eyes, set in a dark face. The Indian, meeting her glance, stepped from his cover, his piece covering the sleeping warrior. A half smothered cry broke from Valerie. At the sound Rushing Water sprang to his feet but the rifle was pressed against his chest, and he had no need to question the intent in the gleaming eyes above it. He threw up his hand in the Indian signal of peace, but the stranger did not lower his rifle.

"Who is the warrior with the white captive?" he asked.

Valerie listened eagerly to the words, none of which she understood.

"Minnesink!" answered the Ottawawa.

"Of what nation?"

"Of the people of the Otter."

"Ha! Pontiac's son?"

A light of satisfaction gleamed in the stranger's eyes.

"It is true," Rushing Water answered.

A sneer curled the lip of the rifleman.

"We have heard among the Illinois that the Ottawawas are on the war-path?" he said.

"It is true."

"And that the son of the great chief of the North turned traitor to his people, and let a white maiden take him captive. This is she?"

Rushing Water ignored the taunt. He had been studying shrewdly the features of the Illinois brave. Now, instead of a direct reply he began a narrative.

"Once," he said, "there was an Illinois warrior taken by Pontiac's people. He was doomed to run the lane of death. A boy of the Ottawawas gave him drink and food, and comfort in his need."

The Illinois leaned forward eagerly, studying the features of the man against whose breast his rifle was pressed. An instant amazement and un-

belief struggled in his eyes. Then his rifle dropped to the ground.

"The dream face!" he cried.

Rushing Water made no reply.

The Illinois plucked from his belt knife and hatchet and held them out.

"My life belongs to my brother," he said.

"He wants it now no more than he wanted it then," said Rushing Water, waving back the proffered weapons. "But let my brother say what he does in these woods."

"I am a runner. I go to say to the great chief of the Ottawawas that my people hasten to join him before Detroit."

"How far behind you is the war party?"

"Three sleeps," the runner replied. "They come in canoes. Let my brother beware; they are not in his debt."

"Rushing Water thanks his brother," said the young warrior. "He will be wary. Farewell!"

He bent his head gravely.

"Farewell!" said the Illinois.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ISLAND

Valerie, crouched low in the canoe and cold with apprehension, breathed a little tremulous sigh of relief as Rushing Water's shadow fell across the boat. He stepped noiselessly to his place at the stern, his finger laid across his lips to enjoin silence upon the girl. Carefully he shoved the boat from the beach, and, without using his paddle, let it silently drift with the current, his glance sweeping up and down the river bank and his rifle across his knees. They had drifted an hour before he let his weapon slip to the bottom of the canoe and seized the paddle. With a quick and steady stroke, he accelerated the speed of the bark, his restless glance shifting from the banks by which they slowly traveled to the broad reaches of water above and below. Alarmed by his conduct, Valerie at length broke the silence. In answer to the question that was more intelligible to him by her tone than by the words she used, Rushing Water said:

"Indian!"

The old look of terror returned to the girl's brown eyes.

"How many?" she asked.

Rushing Water shook his head.

The girl lay back in the canoe, while Rushing Water steadily propelled them down the stream. At last she heard him give utterance to a low cry of satisfaction, and raising her head saw a heavily wooded island splitting the current in the center of the stream. Again taking his rifle across his knees, the young man warily approached the island. Several times he made its circuit in constantly narrowing circles, ready to take flight at the first indication of the presence of Indians in its boskage. Even when he shot the brow of his boat at last under the overhanging branches, whose leaves trailed in the water, he proceeded with the utmost caution. Pulling his bark out on the beach, he signed to the girl not to move, and slipped quietly in among the trees. When he returned to the boat he had explored the entire island and satisfied himself that it was uninhabited. Then he began the preparation for the morning meal.

Rushing Water's examination of the secluded piece of land determined his future conduct. At the easterly end it was buttressed against the

stream by two huge boulders, great monuments of the glacial drift deposited in the river-bed ages ago. Against these the current rolled with considerable force, the waters being thrust to right and left. Behind the boulders the eddies of centuries had builded up the island of rich, alluvial soil in which every seed had taken quick root and every tree had flourished. Birch, wild maple, towering pines and great spreading oaks formed its crowded arborage. The soil was covered with pine needles and dead leaves, and, except round the border where there was a thick fringe of wild laurel and tangled berry bushes, the island was free of underbrush. At the westerly end of the island, which was some three hundred feet in length, two prongs were extended between which lay a quiet basin. The southerly prong reached out toward the south bank of the river and the telltale ripple indicated to the forest-trained eyes of Rushing Water the existence of a probable ford between the island at this point and the mainland.

The young man moored his canoe in the basin and made preparations for a stay of several days on the island. Piecing out his meager store of French with quick, descriptive pantomime, he managed to convey to the mind of Valerie the predicament in which they were. It had occurred

to him to elude Pontiac's allies, ascending the river in force, by making a detour through the forest, but two considerations argued against such a course. In the first place the canoe would have to be abandoned, and the strength and endurance and fitness for the hardship of a forest trial of the white girl in his charge were unknown quantities in the mind of the young warrior. Again the danger of discovery by the Indians was greater among the trees than upon the river, where there was a considerable area of unobstructed view. The island afforded a refuge with a reasonable promise of security. The need of game sufficient for the sustenance of a considerable war party would incline the red men to prefer the mainland for encampment rather than a small island. The covert was thick, and there was no reason why the advancing Illinois should suspect the presence, in their near vicinity, of an enemy or a victim.

So for two days the little boat floated in the secluded basin and the young man and the young woman dwelt in the shade of the great trees. During these two days Valerie added considerably to Rushing Water's knowledge of French. She had impressed upon him the name *Elan d'Eau*, which was her French version of his Indian appellation, and he had accepted the title with a grave smile.

Now, as he lay on the pine needles at her little, moccasined feet while she sat resting her back against a tree trunk, there was a soft swish of wings and a brilliant little bird flashed across their vision. Raising himself on his elbow Rushing Water pointed to the beautiful little denizen of the woods.

"You," he said, with one of his rare smiles. "You, humming bird."

The color deepened in the girl's cheeks, but she laughed happily as she accepted the compliment.

The sun was descending into the heart of the western forest when Rushing Water climbed a huge oak that grew almost in the center of the island, to sweep with his eyes the westerly reaches.

Far down upon the waters some moving, dark spots attracted his attention. As he watched, these slowly took form until he could count six long canoes breasting the river. Gradually they approached until he could distinguish the forty-eight painted warriors who manned them.

They came abreast of the island at last, keeping steadily on their course in the northerly channel. Leaving Valerie beside the canoe, Rushing Water, who had descended from his perch in the oak, kept pace with them on the bank. He breathed a sigh of relief when they passed the foaming eddies

swirling against the rocky buttress that formed the northern wall. Stretching himself at full length behind one of the protecting rocks, he followed with his glance the receding canoes.

They were small in his vision and far away, when through the woods behind him there rang out on the air a scream of terror. The cruel, high, ringing, exultant whoop of several Indian voices followed it like a hideous echo. Springing to his feet, the young warrior plunged into the forest gloom, speeding as fleet as a deer toward the spot where he had left Valerie. He had need of all his speed.

Thinking the danger had passed, Valerie had imprudently stepped out of the covert of underbrush. Two hunters of the Illinois tribe, who had been skulking along the southerly shore, caught a glimpse of the little figure with the flood of chestnut hair, glorious in the evening flush. Instantly they came toward her, fording the shallows. She saw them when they were halfway across, and her terror broke from her throat in that one long scream that had startled Rushing Water at his post among the rocks. She turned to run up the little finger of soil, which the island thrust out into the river, but before she reached the shelter of the woods the Indians were upon her. As the foremost of them reached forward to

grasp her, however, a rifle bullet struck him full on the brow, and with sprawling, outstretched hands, he lurched forward on his face. The second brave checked himself in full career, and looked up to discover the source of the unexpected attack. As he did so, Rushing Water's war-hatchet hissed through the air and struck him full on the chest, its blade cleaving his breast bone. An instant he stood, his arms outstretched, his scalping knife clattering to the stones of the beach. Then his body quivered and crumpled and sank, a shapeless corpse. Turning the body over, Rushing Water recovered his bloody weapon. Then with a sweep of his arm, he crushed the little form of the French girl to his side and ran with her to the canoe. Dropping her in the bottom of the boat, he grasped the paddle and began his flight.

Behind him the wild war-whoops, instinct with menace, were rising on the evening air. The scream, the exultant cry of their tribesmen, and the lashing crack of the rifle had reached the ear of the distant Illinois, and in furious hurry they came sweeping down the stream. Before them sped the lone canoe slipping with ever-increasing speed through the waters. Looking back from time to time, the fugitive boatman could see little spurts of red flame in the gathering dusk

and hear the sharp reports of the pursuers' rifles. One of the canoes of the Illinois drew ahead of the other boats in the hostile flotilla and the little spurts of red flame from the muzzles of the rifles in this bark became more distinct, while the leaden slugs kicked up the spray nearer and nearer to the fugitives. Rushing Water put all his strength into his arm, and the stroke of his paddle although losing nothing in length became more swift. Still as he looked back over his shoulder he saw more and more distinctly the single bark that still kept up the pursuit. The others were lost in the gloom.

At last the reason for the exceptional speed of this canoe disclosed itself. Instead of the single oarsman customary in an Indian war canoe, two warriors wielded the paddles in the Illinois boat. Despite the utmost effort of Rushing Water they were slowly gaining upon him. He could see the two other occupants of the boat loading and firing their rifles. As he bent over in the exertion of propelling his canoe, he spoke to the girl lying at the foot of the boat.

"Can the Humming Bird load a rifle?" he said.

She nodded her head. Her uncle had taught her how to load and handle fire arms.

"Let the Humming Bird load my rifle," said the warrior.

She took the rifle in her hands. The powder horn was close beside her and removing the plug at its point, she let the black grains run into her hand, carefully measuring out the customary charge. Rushing Water smiled.

"More," he said.

She doubled the charge, and he nodded his head in satisfaction. Making a wad of dried grass she rammed home the charge and took a slug.

"Two," Rushing Water directed.

In obedience to his command she inserted the two bullets and packed in the covering wad. Then she set the priming charge and laid the rifle on the floor of the boat at a point indicated by the warrior.

"Now let the Humming Bird move up toward the front," he said.

She crawled to the bow of the boat. To her surprise Rushing Water suddenly stood up, his paddle in his hand and faced the pursuers. Instantly there was a crack of three rifles. The warrior threw up his hands and fell backward into the canoe. A shrill scream burst from Valerie's lips. He looked up at her quickly, smiling, and then she saw his hand close over the rifle.

The exultant whoops of the pursuing Illinois rang loud on the evening air. Still concealed from

their sight by the stern of the drifting canoe, Rushing Water turned swiftly. In a flash he was in a kneeling position, the barrel of his rifle resting on the stern. With a terrific report the double charge in his weapon exploded. Precisely at the water line of the Illinois canoe the cedar splintered. The young warrior clutched his paddle and swiftly drove it into the stream. Behind him the bow of the pursuers' boat settled swiftly. The double slugs had torn a great hole just at the water line, and the river was pouring into the bark. In a few minutes the Illinois were swimming in the stream. The weight of their heavy war equipment had sunk their damaged boat.

Even as the stricken canoe sank, a sudden gloom blotted out the sun. Vast columns of clouds crowded up from the south with great, foaming forefront and flashing fire hearts, and a long, low roll of thunder broke the twilight silence of the woods. Short angry puffs whipped the surface of the waters. At last blackness swept down upon them, sudden and deep, torn by ragged flashes of lightning and vibrant with the crash of thunder, peal upon peal. Like a torrent the rain fell.

Drenched and frightened by her narrow escape, the quick pursuit, and now the wild crashing of this elemental outburst, Valerie crept back through the wet darkness and reached out her hand until

it rested upon the moccasined foot of Rushing Water. He bent down so that he might see her face in the darkness.

"You are frightened?" he asked.

"Not now," she said.

"There is no cause for fear now," he assured her. "The storm will drive the Illinois back. The Humming Bird is safe."

"Thanks to the brave Indian," she answered. "You are Humming Bird's warrior."

CHAPTER XV

THE SILVER FOX

The spring afternoon was on the wane. Rushing Water, stretched on the carpet of pine needles, slept, his breast rising and falling regularly and smoothly. Beside him Valerie sat watching over his rest. They had sought a covert that day some yards in from the river bank. Their rude camp was on the edge of a little natural clearing of some few acres, beyond which the trees towered, their green plumes tossing in the breeze.

Valerie, who had slumbered in the canoe most of the night while her warrior plied his steady stroke, was on guard, now that he took his rest. Through the trees she looked out on the unshaded stretch of grass, watching the birds that rose in swarms from its vivid green blades. Suddenly she started. A swift silent thing had hurtled through the trees between her and the clearing. It came and went in an instant—just a flash of silver gray. The girl was recovering her com-

posure when she heard a faint distant chorus of low snarling howls. It grew louder until her hand reached out to awaken Rushing Water, so close at hand it seemed. Then there streaked across her astonished vision a succession of gaunt gray forms. The broad, low-hung muzzles, the lolling, red tongues, and gleaming fangs affrighted her. Before her hand touched the arm of the sleeping warrior they were gone, and she breathed freely again. For a while the forest was silent. But soon the leaves stirred again and the streak of silver gray flashed before her eyes. Again the snarling yelp of the wolf pack frightened her. She noticed that this time the interval between the hunted and the hunters was shorter. The line of flight was a few feet farther away from her and nearer to the clearing.

Valerie wondered at the recurrence of the incident under her eyes. She had not yet identified the little hunted thing, but she knew that the great lean pursuers were the fierce, hungry gray wolves of the North American wild. Although they traversed the woods with incredible speed, the size of the pack gave her an opportunity to see them. Their bodies, full five feet in length, stretched in their headlong flight seemed even longer, so thin they were, and their tails, giving them an additional measure of two feet, lay extended in a

straight line. The body was a rough grizzled gray, the under body a dull yellow.

When it appeared before her the third time, the hunted animal was at the very edge of the clearing and as it circled back on the opposite side, Valerie saw it break into the open. She now saw that it was a beautiful little animal, with long pointed muzzle and a handsome coat of soft fur, black at the neck and shoulders and ringed with silver at the back and haunches. The bushy tail was tipped with white. The pursuing wolves were close behind now, their red jaws agape. Valerie shuddered.

"Humming Bird is frightened," said a deep voice beside her. The girl started. Her interest in the pursuit had become so intense that she had almost forgotten her companion. As she looked round at the sound of his voice, she saw that he was sitting up, his eyes upon her.

"See!" she said, nodding toward the clearing.

The chase was getting quicker, closer, out there in the open. The fox still kept a short lead, but behind his flying tail the ravenous pack closed in. The wolves were led by a gigantic beast whose loose, wide jaws were dripping froth. The panting of the beasts was like a sob on the quiet air.

True to the strange habit of his species, the fugitive fox ran in circles, narrowing their diame-

ter with each frantic turn. The wolves leaped nearer and nearer the beautiful silver flanks. Watching the forest tragedy with wide, fascinated eyes, Valerie's breath came in quick gasps. There was but a few feet of daylight now between the white-tipped brush and the red muzzle of the leader of the pack.

"Oh, save him! Save him!" the girl cried as she turned her eyes away in horror.

"Let the Humming Bird not fear," the warrior answered. "Watch!"

He had plucked his bow from the ground and was fitting a feathered shaft to the string. She saw the sinews of his left wrist stiffen as his fingers closed on the bow. The long rippling muscles slipped back under the satin skin of his right forearm, the supple biceps rounded out, and the shoulder muscles coiled like bands of steel as he drew the string back so that the shaft crossed his deep chest. An instant he stood poised, the left moccasin advanced, the left knee slightly flexed, the straight line of the extended right leg running true to the incline of the magnificent body. His eye sighted the resting arrow. Valerie gasped at the picture, so graceful, so sure, so splendidly virile. Then the fingers parted and the loosened bow string sang. Swiftly she turned to follow with her glance the arrow's flight. She saw the silver

fox staggering on its last turn, and, close behind, the huge gray body of the leading wolf rising for the final death spring. Into the exposed gray throat the pointed shaft drove and the beast, with a spurt of red blood gushing from the wound, crumpled and fell, and rolled over and over on the ground. Instantly the scent of fresh blood was in the keen nostrils of the pack, and while the wounded giant was tearing with his paws at the feathered dart, his companions leaped on him, rending his still living body with their cruel fangs.

The silver fox, panting and staggering, gained the edge of the wood where Rushing Water stood with a fresh arrow on the string and his tomahawk in his belt. With a little, exhausted whine it sank across the moccasins of Rushing Water.

Valerie covered her eyes with her hands, but the warrior stood fingering the butt of his shaft and watching the fighting wolves. When their raging showed signs of abatement, he singled out another gray form and again his bow string sang. A second victim fed the survivors.

The sun had gone down behind the trees.

"Come!" said Valerie, with a little shudder.

They walked to the river bank. Rushing Water drew the canoe from its hiding place in the weeds and showed its nose on the bank. Valerie stepped into it. At her very heels the silver fox, which

had followed them to the beach, jumped over the side and sank, trembling, on the floor of the little bark. Rushing Water's hand shot out to grasp it by the scruff, but the girl stopped him.

"No! No!" she cried. "Do not—they will get it."

Rushing Water smiled gently.

"Like the Humming Bird," he said, pointing to the little creature.

"Yes," she answered, "I have been hunted, too."

Again the young man smiled.

"The Humming Bird need not fear," he said. "Her warrior shall keep her from the wolves. Let the silver fox stay."

He stepped into the bark and thrust it out on the darkening river. All night long as he beat the water with the cedar blade, the fox lay in the boat. But when next morning he made the beach, the little animal leaped over the side and darted into the woods.

"Oh!" cried Valerie in surprise, "he is gone!"

Rushing Water nodded.

"Yes," he answered. "The silver fox feared the wolves no longer, so he fled away. It is the way of the fox. Yet," he added thoughtfully, "there may be other wolves. He were safer did he stay with the warrior who could protect him."

CHAPTER XVI

NEW ORLEANS

Bad news traveled fast in Colonial America, as elsewhere, and within a few weeks of Pontiac's appearance in force before the rude walls of Detroit, the vast reaches of lonely forest were electrified with fast flying reports of war and massacre. The "dwellers in the long house" of the Iroquois, long time friends of the English and irreconcilable foes of the Algonquin blood, furnished forest runners to carry afar the intelligence of disaster and the call for aid. Traveling light and lonely, with bare bodies and swift, unwearying limbs, these couriers of the wilderness sped through the deep gloom of the primeval arborage to the English strongholds of the east and south. In the nearer settlements there was hasty arming and the sending forth of relief expeditions. Colonial militia and regular troops of the British forces in America, with their dark flanking clouds of native auxiliaries, took the forest trails for the beleaguered outposts in the north-

west. Over their heads and beyond them to the shores of the Atlantic and the Gulf, the wave of intelligence spread, runners carrying it from settlement to settlement, until not only the English colonists along the Atlantic, but the Spaniards in Florida and the French in Louisiana heard of the fire that was raging in the forests of the north.

Many distant homes were filled with anxiety and grief, because in nearly all these settlements were the kin and loved ones of men whose adventurous spirits and hunger for gain led them into the wild woods.

One such home overlooked the crescent bend of the Mississippi at New Orleans. It was a fine, roomy structure set upon a patch of exquisitely kept greensward, that sloped back from the levee some few squares above the "Place d'Armes." Great spreading shade trees flanked it, and rich flower gardens gave evidence of the taste of those who dwelt therein. This was the home of René de Boncour, American resident member of the opulent fur-trading house of Poiret de Boncour y Cie of Bordeaux and New Orleans. This was the residence he had builded in the new world twenty years before, when he brought his bride out from France to share his life in the settlement. His only daughter, Valerie, had been born under its

roof, as had her two brothers, Raoul, now a slender, muscular youth of nineteen, and Gaspare, over whose careless, boyish head his fifteenth summer was passing. There was a great room in the upper story of the house reserved for René de Boncour's brother, and occupied by that famous hunter and woodsman during his not very frequent and not very long visits to the little French City.

It was from this safe and pleasant abode that Valerie had set out in the preceding autumn to accompany her uncle on one of his expeditions up to the great river. René had hesitated when she begged permission to make this journey, but the girl, who adored her heroic uncle, and held in her small body much of the spirit of adventure that animated his iron frame, induced her doting mother to join in her appeal, and at last the father's obduracy melted and he gave reluctant consent.

The news of the outbreak in the lake country, therefore, carried peculiar anguish into this home. The father heard it with a whitening face. He slowly walked from the little coffee house near the barracks, where the dread tidings had reached him, to his home. As the scene on his own front portico greeted his eyes, he paused and stood a moment with his hands clenched until the nails

cut the palms. Gaspare was playing in one shaded corner with two little negro slave boys. Nearer the door a lady sat bending over a spinning wheel. Although her cheeks were still rounded and her eyes bright with the light of an inextinguishable youth, a few of the ringlets that escaped from her dainty muslin cap showed traces of gray. René de Boncour set his teeth and started forward. The sound of his footfall upon the steps of the porch attracted the woman's attention and she looked up with a glad, bright smile. At the sight of his face, set and gray, the smile faded from her countenance and her lips began to quiver.

"René," she asked, her voice tremulous, "what—what is the matter? Valerie——"

Her husband put one arm around her neck and drew her head to his breast.

"My poor little girl," he said, "it may be that God has sent to you and to me a very great tribulation. There is frightful news from the lake country whither Valerie went."

With a sudden gesture the woman threw up her arms and clung to his neck.

"Oh, no!" she cried. "Oh, it cannot be! My little girl, my baby girl!"

A fit of trembling seized her.

"Listen," he said, holding her close to him. "It would be cruel to tell you there is hope, for I

fear there is no hope. The news is that Venango was taken and that all were slain. Listen, little mother, all who were there were slain. There is no captivity, no torture; no foul thing can happen to your little girl."

He whispered this bitter consolation in tones of the deepest tenderness and he was glad when her arms relaxed, and but for the hold of his own she would have fallen in the faintness that had blotted out a consciousness too full of agony for her to bear. Two slaves were called and they carried the stricken mother to her room.

So the blow fell at New Orleans. It transformed René de Boncour from the gayest-hearted among the settlers to the saddest and most silent. Although hopeless of the result, the rich trader organized a considerable party of woodsmen to search the northern forests, and this expedition led by his son Raoul left New Orleans for the north on the day following the arrival of the news of the tragedy. Then the bereaved father took up again the routine of his life.

He was a stout, bald man. His features lacked the lean gauntness of those of his brother, as his frame lacked the iron endurance and silken strength of that renowned wood-rover. He had been noted among his friends as a genial, glad-hearted man, shrewd and fortunate in his busi-

ness ventures and happy in such of the comforts of civilization as the little city afforded.

Six weeks had passed since the receipt at New Orleans of the tidings from the north, and the heat of August lay heavy upon the southern land. With the rising sun a slight breeze sprang up from the Mexican Gulf, rippling the glowing surface of the river. Some fifty yards off the levee, in front of de Boncour's warehouses, a brig lay at anchor. Her high bow breasted the current, and as she swayed under the impulse of the morning breeze her tall masts and wide-spreading yard-arms cast wriggling reflections on the flowing waters.

Early as it was, there were signs of life and activity on board the great ship, and also the crest of the levee. A dozen negro slaves were lowering bales of cotton and furs, taken from the squat warehouse, into flat-bottomed barges, by means of which they were transferred to the ship's side. There, there was creaking of tackle, and the faint echo of a sailorman's chantey as the windlass turned and the bales were lifted over the side and lowered through the open hatches. De Boncour stood superintending the work of loading the vessel, one of his overseers at his side. He was clothed in white linen, his broad-brimmed straw

hat was held in his hand, while he mopped the perspiration from his brow and head with a large kerchief. Suddenly the young man at his side started. Looking out over the river sweep he had seen a canoe turning the bend.

"Monsieur," he cried, "look, look! In the name of God, look!"

De Boncour's quick eyes were raised. The canoe was in plain sight. It held two figures,—one at the stern, paddling steadily, was that of an Indian; the other, facing them, was that of a girl whose countenance was alight with joy and whose arms stretched toward them. With a great cry the trader recognized his lost daughter.

"Run," he said to his overseer, "run, Pierre, and fetch Madame de Boncour. Tell her to fly, that Valerie is come! Oh, great God be thanked! Valerie has come!"

Swiftly the canoe cleft the waters until it reached the levee, whereon father and mother now knelt with radiant faces in thankful prayer, while behind them little Gaspere voiced his boyish delight in wild whoops of joy, and an ever growing circle of negro slaves gathered to look on, their black faces shining.

Within a few minutes Valerie was in her mother's arms, while Rushing Water in more than

a little amazement was enduring the frantic embrace of a stout, bald-headed man, who had kissed him on both cheeks and was now weeping upon his breast.

CHAPTER XVII

HOME

After their escape from the war party of the Illinois on the Ohio, Rushing Water and Valerie managed to evade the notice of hostiles. Their journey proceeded peacefully as they gradually floated out of the danger zone. The Ohio's current swung them out into the majestic flood of the father of waters, whose windings they followed through the fertile southern land. Bred on the lakes, Rushing Water was now traveling, for the first time, through a land of less rigorous climate, and he eagerly noted the increasing warmth of the sun, the widening varieties of four-footed and feathered life, the richening vegetation that showed in the color and diversity of form of tree and flower.

Blossoms strange to his sight made the river banks gorgeous under the flecked sunshine sifting down through the brilliant and abundant foliage. Broad waving savannahs of blue grass broke at times the continuity of the emerald forest, and

Rushing Water watched in wonder the ripple of the breeze over the surface of the wide swards under the golden sunshine, and the clouds of birds that rose from the covert and streaked across the azure sky. Tender, mysterious tints hung like fire shot veils on the remote horizon. Graceful palms, standing alone against the sky on the river bank, delighted the eye of the stranger. Strange beasts, too, showed themselves in the new world. In place of the moose or elk of his native wilds, Rushing Water now saw the ferocious bearded heads and huge shoulders of bison drinking at the river edge. The lynx of the north—"the tree-cats," the Indians called them—gave place to the American panther.

Rushing Water shot a bison and found its meat good. Now that he felt free to use his rifle, there was no fear of starvation where forest and stream were teeming with game. The quick and unwearied intelligence of the young man made him an apt pupil, and Valerie was surprised at the rapidity with which he learned the simple French she taught him. His knowledge of her language was soon such as to make conversation between them less and less difficult. She now called him *Elan d' Eau* whenever she spoke to him, and following her example he used the name when speaking of himself. Although he no longer

dreaded an attack by hostile Indians, the danger in the woods from wild beasts and serpents was such that he continued to make his journeys by night, camping during the daylight hours upon the river bank.

For this reason he passed, without notice, several white settlements. The first to attract his attention, they came upon in the early dawn as they were about to end one of their nocturnal journeys. It was a little cluster of cabins surmounting one of the bluffs that occasionally rose above the otherwise level line of the river bank. Rushing Water started, as the habitations of white people broke upon his vision.

"See," he said pointing. "See, Humming Bird, there are the houses of your people. Elan d' Eau shall leave you there among your own friends."

Valerie looked up at him with a question in her eyes.

"And where shall Elan d' Eau go?" she asked.

He shrugged his shoulders and swept his hand out to the westward.

"The woods are wide," he said.

The little head was shaken quite vigorously and decidedly.

"No, No!" she answered. "Elan d' Eau shall not leave me here and go alone into the wilds. He shall take me to the white chief, my father, who

shall thank him for what he has done for me."

"Does the Humming Bird so wish it?" he asked, looking at her with a quick, keen glance.

"She does," answered Valerie decidedly.

The young man had let his paddle trail idly in the water from the time the village had appeared. He now caught it in his hands and plied it with a long powerful stroke, under whose propulsion the canoe shot forward.

Valerie sat watching him awhile. At last she said:

"When Elan d'Eau saved the Humming Bird from the warriors of his own people, did he shut the door of his father's long house against himself?"

The young man nodded gravely.

"Forever," he said.

Again for a few minutes Valerie was thoughtful.

"Then why," she asked, "did the warrior spare the white girl?"

With a slow, grave smile Rushing Water shrugged his shoulders.

"It is hard to tell what you do not know," he answered. "The Indian in war spares none, not the warrior, not the squaw, not the babe. It is the way with my people. But when Elan d'Eau saw the little ones fall under the tomahawk, and

the white women scalped after the men had fallen, he knew that the power to do those things had been taken out of his heart by the Great Spirit. When Elan d' Eau was a boy, it pained him to see his mother toiling and his own people were angry at him because he would do a squaw's work. There is something here"—he touched his breast—"which is different."

They did not speak of the matter again, nor did Rushing Water again propose to leave the girl at any of the white settlements, the appearance of which upon the river bank was growing more frequent as they fared southward. When they reached the sharp turn of the river, as it bends to the north just above the city of her birth, Valerie recognized the familiar country, but she said nothing to her companion. As they entered the crescent and the city burst suddenly upon their view, she quietly enjoyed the look of amazement that spread over the face of the young man. His eyes swept along the crest of the levee, dwelt on the greensward of the "Place d' Armes," rose to the spire of the old French church of St. Louis in the background, took in the neat little dwellings on the well-ordered streets, the canal on its westerly border, and the battlemented walls that protected it from attack by land. Then with grow-

ing astonishment depicted on his features, his gaze rested on the vessel aswing on the tide.

"See," he said, "the great house on the waters," as he pointed to the bark de Boncour's slaves were loading.

"That," said Valerie, "is a ship. It has great wings of white cloth which the wind fills, blowing it across the big water to the land of the white peoples."

"A huge canoe," said Rushing Water, nodding with apprehension. "It would hold a hundred warriors."

"See!" said the girl excitedly, "there is my father on the shore. Ah! he sees us, he is sending for mother! See, she comes running down to the bank! Take me to them quickly, Elan d' Eau!"

In obedience to her command, Rushing Water steered the bow of his canoe in toward the levee, and soon witnessed that joyful greeting between the fond parents and the child they believed to have been lost.

The first transports of joy over, de Boncour hurried with the little party into his home. There the father and mother and little Gaspare sat listening, with breathless interest, to Valerie's tale of her danger and her escape. Rushing Water stood silently beside her chair as she spoke. When the

story was ended at last, the mother looked up at him with grateful eyes, and the father wrung him warmly by the hand.

"And so, little girl, you have come back to us," he said, turning to Valerie. "Jules is dead. God rest him, for he was a brave man."

The shadow which had come into his eyes at the mention of his brother's name, was soon dissipated, however, so deep was his joy in the recovery of his daughter.

"Come," he said, "you must be famished. Mother, have the breakfast brought. We shall feast, indeed, this morning. Our Indian hero, he shall sit at the head of the table."

He turned with a smile, looking for Rushing Water, but the young man was no longer in the room. He had taken advantage of the diversion of attention from himself to noiselessly glide from the apartment.

Rushing to the porch, de Boncour saw him stepping over the levee. Although the trader called to him, he did not come back. His canoe soon vanished round the bend in the river.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WOOD THRUSH CALL

Valerie de Boncour's white pillow held a restless little head. The silky, auburn tresses were in a sad rumple and the big brown eyes were soft with the mist of unshed tears, when the window curtain began to whiten with the coming of the day. Under her snowy night drapery her heart was troubled with a strange unease. Her first day in the city had been filled with the delight of the home-coming, the beaming happiness of her mother's face, the boisterous glee of Gaspare, the gay volubility of her father, the salute of gathering friends; young men's cordial and gayly complimentary welcome and the tearfully happy embraces of girl friends. A weary little head had touched a soft pillow to sink into immediate slumber. The next morning she had spent among the bright flowers of her beloved garden, the afternoon with Adoree and Babette Vatreuil at the Vatreuil place, some squares away. But the night had come and with it an inexplicable sense of loneliness. She found her mind much

occupied with the face and figure of Elan d' Eau. Many times she shook her little head in a physical effort to rid her mind of his disquieting memories, but he went not for shakings of a wilful little head. Even when she escaped him in waking consciousness, he glided unbidden into her dreams. So the restless night hours, patterned in disturbing dreams and memories, marched their slow procession through the little sleeping chamber, until the dark trailing robe of the last of them was fringed with a wan and misty blue by the fast following dawn.

In the gloom of Valerie's room the square of her eastern window slowly defined itself. Outside the song birds began their matins. Lazily, little Valerie turned on her side to watch the growing light and listen to the feathered choristers' pure notes of joy. Suddenly, she sat up in bed, listening with brightened eyes and quickened pulses. Through the bubbling chorus there rippled like the golden thread on a banner of silk the reedy sweetness of the wood thrush call. It was a note strange in Louisiana brakes, although familiar in the northern arborage. Smoothing her rumpled hair, Valerie slipped out of bed and hastened to the window. Carefully she drew aside the white draperies until the east-light shone on her features. The far horizon

glowed opalescently, pale with flashing glints. A misty star hung in the sky, watching its dancing reflection in the nearer reaches of the river. The far edge of the wide water blowed with the red of dying embers under gray ashes. Where the trees clustered, north of the stream, the shadows were still deep.

Against the pale, faint flushing sky a dark figure was outlined. Valerie recognized instantly the long clean lines of limb and torso, the proud lift of the head, although the face was in the shadow. As she looked down the wood thrush call thrilled forth again. With a glad little smile, she answered the signal. Waving his hand Elan d' Eau stepped toward the trees. At the edge of the shadow he paused, and again his right hand was flung up and out in salutation, grave and graceful. Then he vanished in the gloom of the trees.

Valerie returned to her couch, the unease gone from her heart. She joined father, mother and brother at the breakfast table with the roses abloom in her cheeks and her eyes bright. Madame de Boncour beamed on her, Gaspere gave her a rough, but enthusiastic kiss, and René looked proudly and happily upon his daughter.

"Strange," said the father as he sipped his coffee. "Strange that Indian youth to whom we

owe so much has completely disappeared. I should like to thank him." The trader sighed.

"Ah yes, René, you must find and reward him," agreed Madame de Boncour. "Nothing we have would be too much to bestow on that noble savage."

Valerie's lips opened, but something constrained her to silence.

"Ohé! he seems to vanish like a ghost," complained René. "First Pierre and his gang made search. Nothing. Not so much as a footstep. Then I paid the Chickasaw chief a good gold louis to send his trackers out. Pouf! They might as well be blind dogs with a cold in the head. Not a trace. Not a broken twig. My dear, it is a mystery."

But the next morning the wood thrush's note thrilled on the river edge and the dark figure stood outlined against the dawn. Again Valerie smiled, her little face framed in the window draperies, again Elan saluted with wide-flung hand, and disappeared among the trees. And morning after morning thereafter Valerie opened her eyes and listened for the signal among the bird notes.

But René de Boncour was much perplexed. The burden of unredeemed obligation, of inadequately expressed gratitude, lay heavy upon him,

and all his efforts to find the Indian were unavailing.

Some weeks after Valerie's return, Monsieur and Madame Vatreuil and their girls took dinner with the de Boncours. Madame Vatreuil, short, snappy and explosive, was quite a favorite in René's home, and the two girls were devoted friends of Valerie.

"Oh my dears!" the little lady exclaimed addressing the dinner table, "but so strange a thing did happen this day! So strange, Monsieur de Boncour! So strange, Madame de Boncour! So strange, my dear children!"

"Ah, but what was it, Madame Vatreuil?" asked Madame de Boncour.

"I went to church," began the little lady.

"Ho-ho!" laughed Monsieur Vatreuil, slapping his fat thigh. "So strangely strange is that, angels of fire! Why René, my comrade, she goes to church for Mass, for Vespers, day in, day out! Ohé! but a strange, strange thing!"

Madame de Vatreuil flashed a glance of scorn at him.

"Oh, he so loves to talk, he cannot let me begin," she said. "It was not that I went to church that was so strange—Ah no! I know my duty as a Christian, which some do not, lying abed Sunday morning, fat and lazy, is it not so?"

But listen. It was before Vespers and I had gone to say a little prayer that my husband might not be such a fool,—ohé! M. Vatreuil, a good wife am I—and the church was deep in gloom. From where I knelt I saw the ruby gleam of the altar light and the ghostly outlines of the altar. The monstrance shone softly above the tabernacle and one of the good fathers knelt before it. You could not see his form, for the dark and the black of the cassock, you know, but the little light shone on the tonsured skull and the white hair to his shoulders, like a halo of snow it was.”

“Why, how she talks!” murmured Monsieur Vatreuil, looking to his friend de Boncour for sympathy.

“But then came the fright,” Madame Vatreuil went on, completely ignoring her husband. “I looked to my left and there stood a tall, dark shape. Mother of Saints, how I trembled! Then the good father turned round and the light ran along the silver rim of the crucifix, thrust in his girdle. He is old, that priest, and strange in the church of St. Louis. Oh, his brow is splendid, and his eyes so keen with wrinkles all round, and great snow drifts of eyebrows hanging above. A little man, too, the father.”

“Father Poilet, he told me,” said René, “that

he had a visitor, Father Reville, who had just come down from the Indian country."

"So," nodded Madame Vatreuil, "he it must have been. He raised his hand and gave benediction. Then he took the monstrance and put it in the tabernacle, and went away.

"But as he faced us, I saw the shape beside me bend forward. Nay more, he went to the chancel rail. And, my dears, he held in his hand a crucifix. Under the altar light I saw it, all glittering like a diamond. And he looked at it and then at the gold cross on the altar cloth. Then he turned and went out. But I saw him plainly before the altar, and"—she paused for dramatic effect—"he was a tall, young Indian savage."

"Eh!" exclaimed René de Boncour excitedly. "An Indian you say, Madame? Then, by the crow of a cock, it was he! Oh yes. This ghost of a warrior that saved our Valerie, and vanishes so quickly away."

"Well!" gasped Madame Vatreuil, "Now what do you think? So! With a crystal rood in his hand. Did I not say it was strange? But yes."

CHAPTER XIX

THE WARRIOR

In close conference, René de Boncour and his wife walked up and down the garden path, the trader's hand resting affectionately upon the shoulder of the little woman at his side. The eyes of Madame de Boncour were troubled, and there was a little pucker of worry on the usually serene brow of her husband.

"Ohé, but I never thought of that, dolt that I am!" exclaimed René—"Of course he was a handsome fellow, and chivalrous as a knight of the old times, but the red blood, the red—the *Indian* blood—Mon Dieu! It would not do—it is not for our little girl!"

"Perhaps," said Madame de Boncour, looking up into his troubled eyes with her own full of perplexity, yet seeking a clearer, brighter vision, "it may be I am too apprehensive. Valerie said nothing to me to indicate that she really loved this Indian, or that her regard for him was other than a warm, even passionate gratitude for sav-

ing her life at the beginning, and then bringing her safely and happily through that wonderful journey of so many months back to her home and us. All that she really talked about were these mysterious morning signals—wondering what they might mean, and how long they might continue.”

“Did you ask her why she had not spoken of them when they first began?” asked the father.

“No, because she explained that she felt troubled as to which was the right course to pursue—whether to withhold the knowledge from us, as she knew how anxious we have been to find him, or to tell me about the signals, and thus betray the secret of one to whom she owes more than her life, and who obviously desires to keep beyond the reach of our gratitude.”

“H’m!” René murmured. His forehead was wrinkled in pained perplexity.

But while the masculine head of the father was laboriously reasoning over the solution, the mother’s heart raced to its intuitive answer with almost abrupt finality in the words,

“No, no, I am not too apprehensive. I feel that she really loves him, though without knowing it. She is so changed from the sunny, singing child of a year ago—she broods, she starts at nothing, she is restless night and day, and the

tears are always so near—oh, my little girl, my little girl!——”

“Come, little mother,” said René tenderly, “no real harm has been done if she isn’t aware she loves him. It is all romance, this affair, from beginning to end. Adventure in the wild, rescue, protection and mystery, bird calls at dawn,—all this is the kind of tinder that sets fire to a girl’s heart. Do you not think so, Mamma?”

She nodded her head with a rueful little smile, and responded,

“Yes, it is true, dear. Our little Valerie left us to go north, a child, and went through all this experience during the most impressionable period of her life. What wonder that she returns to us a woman, with an awakened heart and a woman’s longing, though in judgment still but a child?”

“Ah, but, Mother, I don’t feel that her heart is really awakened yet. If it were, there would be definite action on her part. She would be moved to meet him when he calls at dawn, and not be content with but a child’s answering signal.”

“Yes, yes, dear heart,” the tremulous mother replied, “but what next—what next? Her restless little heart will soon awake, and then she will recognize and *know* what now she only feels. Just a sudden breath would kindle a flame that

you and I would be powerless to stifle. It might even come to-morrow—who knows?”

“Mother, I know,” replied René resolutely. “Now that I know where to find him, I shall meet him myself to-morrow morning, and——”

“But René——”

“No, no, Mamma, I will not forget all that he has done for us, but neither will I forget that his blood is *red*, and that there are more ways than one to pay a debt of gratitude.”

So the next morning when Elan d' Eau stepped from the shadow of the trees, he saw advancing from the house toward him the stout form of Valerie's father. Folding his arms on his breast, he awaited the approach of the trader. René looking up into his calm, clear eyes, addressed him kindly.

“I am glad to meet my red brother,” he said. “I have sought him for a long time.”

Elan bowed gravely, but made no reply.

“Why,” asked the white man, “has the young warrior hidden himself from his friends?”

“I am not of the people of my friend, the white man,” Elan answered slowly. “The ways of the white people are not my ways, and I would be a stranger among them.”

“Yet you saved the white maiden,” the trader said, “and her father has a grateful heart. But

you speak true when you say you are strange in the ways of my people, and I am strange in the ways of your people. I do not understand why you come each morning to signal beneath the window of my daughter."

Speaking very gravely, Elan answered:

"The young warrior," he said, "has no people. He is dead to his tribe. The young warrior has but one friend. So he comes each day with the dawn to sing with the voice of the thrush, under the window of the Humming Bird. Does he do a wrong thing?"

"Yes," answered René positively. "Perhaps not according to the ways of the Indian, but wrong according to the ways of the white. Listen! The Humming Bird is but a child, and the heart of a child is like dried twigs in the forest, easy to set on fire. Does my red brother understand?"

Elan nodded his head without answering.

"Humming Bird," René went on, eagerly, "must dwell in the ways of her own people. She is a white girl, my friend is an Indian. Does my red brother understand?"

Two tears gathered in the eyes of Elan and rolled down his cheeks. De Boncour observed them with a start of amazement.

"I have hurt the heart of my red brother," he said, sympathetically.

Elan d' Eau remained silent, motionless, while the embarrassed and nonplussed Frenchman awaited a reply. The young man only turned his eyes, glistening with heavy tears, upward toward the far window of his Humming Bird.

"I am sorry—sorry," finally spoke René de Boncour, moved more deeply than he cared to betray, at the visible sign of grief in an Indian. Between men the moment of tears is always tense. "But can't you understand? You *must* understand," he continued, impatient with his own emotion. "You must go away, else it were better you had let my daughter perish under the tomahawks of your tribe. But the father of the Humming Bird is not ungrateful. See, this bag of gold! You shall be rich among your people. This is money—wampum. It will buy you power, everything that you could wish. This gold is all yours. You deserve it. With it you can reach your tribe in safety and be their chief. Take it, Elan d' Eau, and with it our endless gratitude, and—depart!"

He proffered the leather pouch to the young man.

Elan d' Eau stood motionless, his arms folded on his breast, his eyes fixed always on the window of his Humming Bird.

The Frenchman waited, urging the bag of gold.

"You wish the happiness of the Humming Bird, do you not?" Without waiting for a reply, he continued. "Her future happiness and welfare are all that there is in life for her mother and me. From the time she was born we have planned for her, and have hoped that some day she would marry a man of her own race, in some position of honor and trust among his people. She is a child yet, and knows nothing of love, or of the responsibilities of a woman. It would be most unfair, a deep hurt to her for you to remain here."

Slowly Elan's eyes turned toward the trader.

"White man, father of the Humming Bird," finally spoke the young man, "listen! I am an Indian. I was born in the wilderness, with things that are wild. But wildness is not cruelty. The forests hold kindness as well. If I should attempt a cruel thing, the Great Spirit would say to my heart, no! The things of the forest do not say false words, father of the Humming Bird. The winds sing a true song among the pines, back there in the north. The voice of Rushing Water is not a lie."

The Frenchman showed his deep embarrassment, and hastened to say.

"Forgive me. I meant no insult, no accusation. You have a noble heart, if your skin is dark."

"What matters the color of the skin?" Elan questioned. "It is what the Great Spirit puts in the heart that makes a man, whether he be an Indian or a white. Your gold cannot buy me a white skin, nor a higher place among my people. Rushing Water is a chief. Rushing Water is the son of a chief. But listen, father of the Humming Bird," he continued, and his voice grew stern. "When my people were avenging their wrongs on the white man, suddenly, in the midst of blood and death, Rushing Water saw the Humming Bird. The Great Spirit spoke to him, and told him to protect her. Rushing Water did his will. He never shall return. He is cut off from his people. Rushing Water is a chief, but he has no warriors. Rushing Water is a chief, but he has no tribe. He is alone. But the Great Spirit told him to protect the Humming Bird. Rushing Water did so. He does so now. White man, Rushing Water is *her* warrior!"

The Frenchman turned aside to lay the bag of gold on a nearby garden seat, and in utter bewilderment started to exclaim,

"But you cannot——"

He looked up.

The Indian was gone.

CHAPTER XX

THE DECISION

When René de Boncour joined his wife in the house he felt beaten, and dejectedly rehearsed the scene with the Indian.

"It seems incredible," he concluded, "that he could refuse the money. He had nothing—no home, no people, no friends but us, and our friendship must seem a strange and perverse thing to him. How does he live? He is proud as a King, and has notions of honor that his white brothers might note to their advantage. But what shall we do—what shall we do? No time must be lost, not even a day. Who knows what an Indian might do?"

During this speech the Frenchman paced the floor in unconcealed agitation, which was fully shared by his wife.

"He said he was her warrior!" she exclaimed. "Does he not realize that we are her natural protectors, and now that she is safe with us again she does not need a warrior?"

"Little mother, is she safe with us? Is she safe from him anywhere in this country? Would we be doing right in keeping her here, with an Indian, who has nothing in the world to lose, constantly watching her? I don't know what it is I fear, but I am desperate with an apprehension that I cannot define."

Again the woman's intuition directed the father's gropings, and she replied with decision.

"I know what I fear. It is my daughter—my little woman-daughter. She has the same fine notions of honor as this Elan, and in addition, a high-strung, romantic heart that would brook no guidance, should a climax threaten. She must go away, dear. We must send our little girl away again, and there is only one place—and so far away! France!"

"Ah, France! The very thing, and I have a boat sailing to-morrow," he cried with immense relief. "Mme. de Cardot goes in the brig *Marie Céleste*, and she will take care of Valerie. It is time that she finished her education in the old country. Once there, with the faithful nuns, she will be perfectly safe, and this romance, that was born only of novelty and excitement, will die a natural death. It will have nothing to feed upon."

"Sh— Sh! Here she comes!" warned the

mother, as the girl's buoyant step was heard on the stair.

Receiving the tender greetings of her parents, Valerie turned eagerly to her father.

"Papa dear, I saw you from my window talking to Elan. What did he say? When will he come to see us?" she questioned eagerly.

The embarrassed father parried for time, and evading her direct questions, answered haltingly.

"Well, you see, Valerie, he seemed to wish not to take the bag of gold,—this, here—which I offered him as a sort of reward, you know. He is somewhat shy perhaps, and,—er—er—well, he didn't take it, and—and—and of course he ought to, as he has no means, but he wouldn't—that is, he didn't, and——"

"Father, did you ask him to come to see us?" cried the girl in much distress.

"Why, Valerie, you see," stumbled René, "we can't exactly ask him to come to see us—What would we do with him?"

"Do? Why, be good to him, of course. Wasn't he good to me? Don't you realize, Papa, that he saved my life, not once, but several times? We ought to do something for him—something big and splendid—why, Papa, aren't you grateful?" she cried reproachfully.

"Little Daughter," the anxious mother inter-

rupted, "can't you see that we are grateful, when we offer him so much money? But he isn't like us—his ways are not our ways, his blood not our blood. He is, you see, an Indian, while we are——"

"He is an Indian, a redskin," the father broke in impatiently. His daughter turned on him a pair of eyes that he realized he had never seen before. In desperation he continued hastily, "Yes, a redskin! He is familiar with murders and massacres, tortures and treacheries, and all sorts of barbaric horrors. He is savage. Can we ask a savage to our home? We do owe him a great debt. But we cannot pay him by offering him something he could not be expected to appreciate. His care of you was like the faithfulness of a dog, but we would not ask a dog to dine with us——"

"A dog, father, a *dog*? Do you call Elan a *dog*? Oh, Papa, Papa——" she broke into sobbing—not the petulant tears of a child. A woman's hurt was there, that echoed the mother's fears.

"Ah, but Valerie! Listen!" coaxed the father, grasping for an ally—"We have such good news for you—see! You shall go to France, dear old France, our old home, child. You shall sail tomorrow, with your dear Mme. de Cardot. Your

mother and I were just planning it all for you when you came in. Won't it be glorious? You can finish your schooling, and then——"

"France? Go away?" stammered the girl gaspingly,—the color receding from her face—"I—will—not—go! Never!" More vehemently—"I—will never leave—this place—never! never!" She rushed from the room,—and the speechless parents heard the passionate patter of her feet on the stairs.

"Well!" said the father.

"Well?" echoed the mother.

"What next?" moaned the father.

"Ah, what?" sighed the mother.

"She must go, of course," said René, and with unspoken but sure understanding, the mother's fine interpretation of her husband's statement was that to her fell the delicate task of restoring harmony, healing wounds, and generally smoothing all the difficulties that lay in the way of starting her rebellious daughter peacefully away on her journey. To her everlasting credit, and to the everlasting glory of all such saints, the Peacemakers of Homes, let it be known that Mme. de Boncour, brave, tender, and with aching heart, lovingly hastened all preparations for her daughter's journey across the ocean to the land of safety.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SWIMMER IN THE MOONLIGHT

A slight breeze had sprung up with the setting of the sun and Captain Edmond Bart, the sturdy, weather-beaten master of the brig *Marie Céleste*, had spread every stitch of her white canvas on the wide reaching yards to catch its feeble propulsion. The anchor chains had clanked up through the hawse pipe, the anchor had been made fast and the vessel's head swung around under the impulse of tide and breeze.

As the ship got under way there slipped round under her stern and headed for the landing, a small boat vigorously rowed by two negro lads. In the stern of the little craft sat a man and a woman, and no second glance was needed for the recognition of René de Boncour and his wife. René's round countenance was very solemn and very red, but distressed as he was he kept his self-control. The desolated mother, however, gave way to her anguish and sobbed out her grief over the parting with the beloved daughter. She

had left Valerie alone in her cabin at the parting, the poor child's face drenched in tears. Madame de Boncour with that unfailing yet inexplicable power of mothers, had softened her daughter's heart so that the girl unquestionably made her quick preparation for departure when bidden to do so by her father. Sympathetic, her heart torn by grief and fear, little Madame de Boncour had kept a shrewd watch on her daughter, but there had been no thrush's pipe in the garden shrubbery and no sign of Elan d' Eau, and now at last the mother deemed her daughter safe in the cabin of the brig, and the exhausting strain of apprehension over, she indulged her natural grief.

The rowboat pulled up alongside the levee and René assisted his wife to land, and they both turned and through misty eyes watched the great ship.

On his quarterdeck Captain Bart stood beside the helmsman, his eyes now sweeping the sky, now scanning the hungry sails lapping eagerly at each gust of wind. His orders came short and quick as he tacked back and forth, taking advantage of every puff and trick of the current. Thus engaged he did not see a dark hand that appeared on the starboard mainmast shroud, nor was he aware of an unbidden guest until a dripping Indian, who had leaped agilely over the rail, stood upon the

deck. His glance slipping down to note the set of the main sheet, rested on this figure.

"Ha!" he exclaimed in amazement, "who is this? How did you get here, and what is your business?"

Then the light of understanding gleamed in his eyes. His employer, Valerie's father, had warned him against Rushing Water and had told him enough of the Indian's persistence to put him on his guard. At the sound of his voice the crew had turned and now several of them were advancing toward the rail against which the Indian leaned. With a level glance Rushing Water looked up at the ship's master, who was leaning now over the light rail that guarded his quarter-deck.

"The Indian wishes to go to distant lands. He would work for the white chief on the great canoe."

"Not on this boat," gruffly replied the captain. "Ahoy, there, *mes enfants!* Overboard with him! We have no time to waste."

His sharp words reached the ears of Valerie alone in her cabin. She rushed to the porthole and looked out, listening eagerly. Up on deck the voice of the young warrior pleaded.

"Let me go with you! Let me go! I will work, I will pay."

He paused; then straightening himself to the full measure of his magnificent height, while the admiring sailors noted the play of the muscles under his satin skin, he said:

"Listen to me, white chief! I am a chief and I do not lie. The Humming Bird is on your great canoe. I must go with her, for I am her warrior."

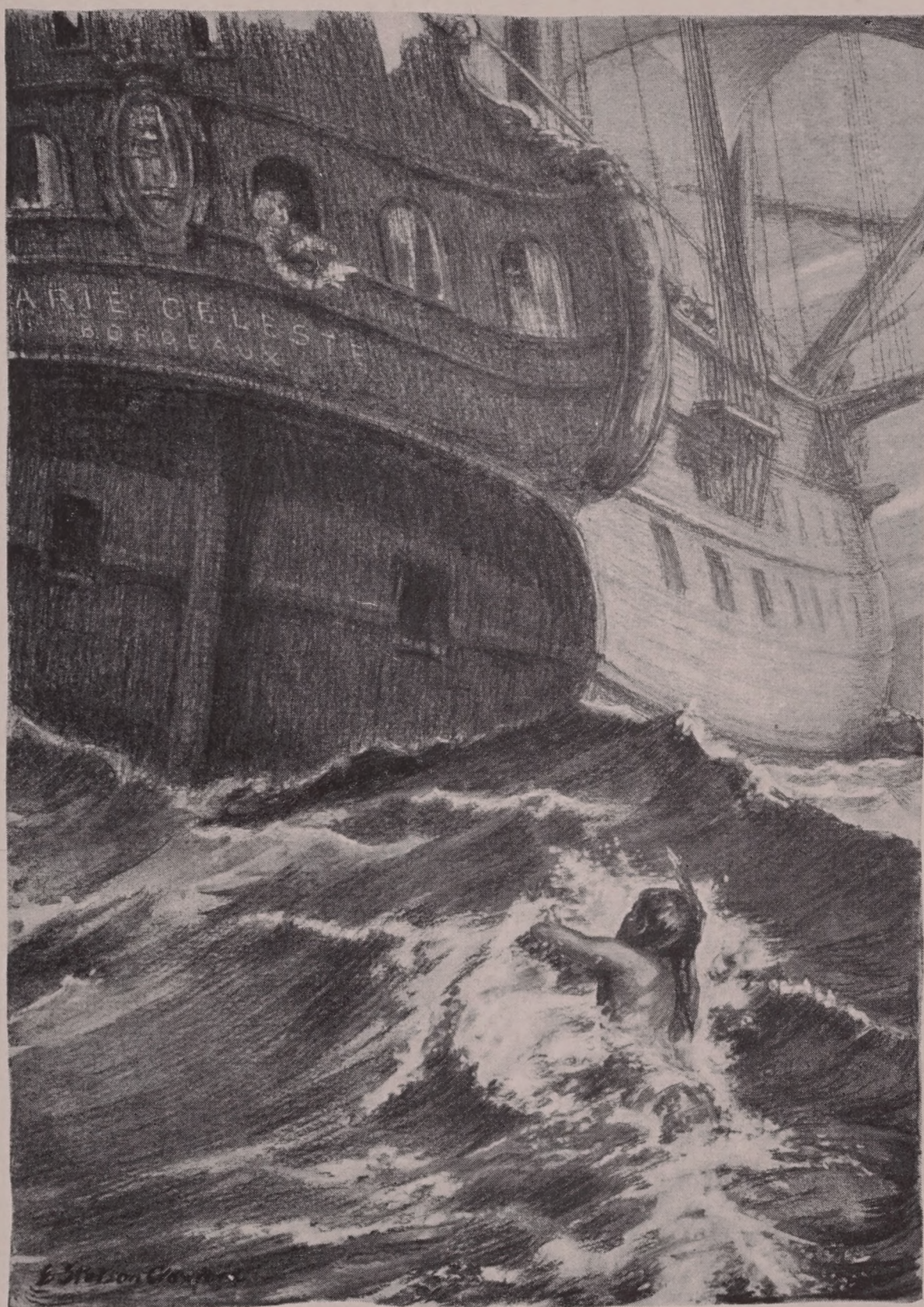
"Overboard!" roared the captain angrily.

Watching from the porthole Valerie saw a form shoot downward and disappear with the splash of spray. Another moment a shining head and glistening shoulder appeared and the Indian, smiling up at the face framed by the porthole, swam close to the vessel's side, keeping easily abreast. The girl waved her hand to him as he slipped with easy, even motion through the water, and called out:

"Good-by, good-by!"

The sunset breeze freshened, the great sun bannered in the low sky, and the ship swung into its glow, easing away before the air current. For a while the warrior swam even with the open port, his eyes on the little face which it framed. Twilight deepened, a star came out, and the last glory of the sun's pennants was reflected softly on the waters.

Still the swimmer paced the ship untiring, but



“Good-by, good-by!”

with each stroke the vessel gained on him. The porthole and the face imprisoned in it disappeared from his vision. He saw a fluttering hand, and then the great stern of the ship intervened. The sky was dark now, but the full moon rose behind the boat and sped a silver shaft in whose light the name of the brig standing in huge gold letters on the stern was clearly discernible. Close in the wake the swimmer followed, his eyes on the glittering letters.

There was a surge under the bows now for the night wind had freshened and the space between the lonely swimmer and the stern of the ship increased rapidly. Standing with his hand on the rail, Captain Bart watched the unequal struggle between the wind and human longing, and felt a sudden sympathy for this man of an alien race glow under his uniform coat.

"Bravely done," he breathed under his breath. "By the star of the north I never saw such a swimmer,—nor such a lover! Our little passenger below may well be proud of devotion like that. Eh, but it is a hopeless job, my brave."

He watched the dark head farther and farther astern in the radiant path of the moon. At last it was so far away that he had to strain his eyes

to catch a glimpse of it bobbing in the silver spray. Then he lost it. He leaned far over the rail to see, but the sheen of the moon was broken only by the waves.

CHAPTER XXII

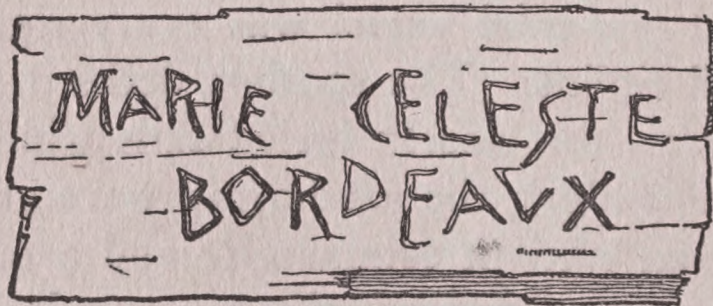
THE STOWAWAY

The short, mild winter had passed and the tender green of spring was again upon the vegetation of Louisiana. At anchor in the broad river, just off the de Boncour levee, swung the good ship *Juliette* of Bordeaux. She was a majestic vessel of five hundred tons, high, fore and aft, and deep-waisted; her main, mizzen and foremasts towering above her snowy decks seemed to pierce the sky, and the width of her yard arms indicated an unusual spread of canvas. On board this beautiful and powerful vessel was every sign of excellent discipline. The spotless decks, the neatly coiled lines, the closely furled sails which lay in snowy rolls along the yard arms, were all telltale signs of an efficient commander and a quick and obedient crew. Indeed, the commander himself in his person, as he now emerged from a companionway and stepped out on the quarter deck, bore out the impression created by the condition of his ship. His white blouse was buttoned to his

throat, despite the heat of the day. His cap was firmly set upon his gray hair, which, descending over his collar, was tied in a ribbon, the loops and free ends of which were so accurately matched in length as to seem to have been measured with a rule. His jaw was square, his mouth firm, his brows level, and his eyes keen and steady beneath them.

"Well, my friend," he said crisply but not unkindly to a young Indian who had just clambered over the side from a canoe. "What can I do for you?"

The Indian drew from the bosom of his shirt a piece of bark which he presented to the captain. Rude lettering had been scrawled upon its flat surface. As the captain took it in his hands he glanced down upon these words:



"Well!" he said, looking up with a question in his eyes.

The Indian laid a dark finger upon the upper line.

"What means that totem?" he asked.

Captain François Halevy smiled again.

"So you take me for a schoolmaster," he said.

"Well, all right. The sign means *Marie Céleste*. It is the name of a ship."

The Indian smiled understandingly.

"And this?" he asked, placing his hand on the word below.

"Bordeaux," read Captain Halevy. "That is the name of a big city in the white man's country, where there are many houses and many people."

"It is pictured on the back of your great canoe," the Indian said.

"Yes," answered the captain, "like the *Marie Céleste*, we come from Bordeaux."

"And," asked the Indian quietly, "when you cross the big water, do you go to Bordeaux?"

Captain Halevy nodded. His visitor seemed satisfied. He returned the tablet of bark to the breast of his shirt.

"Rushing Water is thankful," he said, with a grave inclination of his head. "He wanted to know what the totem meant. When he saw it on the back of your ship, he came on board to ask you."

Then the young Indian turned, swung himself over the side, and was soon paddling away down the river.

Captain Halevy watched with admiration the strength and suppleness of his figure.

"Ah!" he said under his breath, "some of these savages are great men. 'Tis a pity they do not take to the sea."

The *Juliette* was laden at last, with furs and cotton bales, and long sleeves of tobacco from the plantations further up the stream. René de Boncour placed in the captain's hands for delivery to his daughter in Bordeaux, a great package of letters.

Just before the anchor was broken out of the mud in the bottom of the Mississippi, Captain Halevy received on board the one passenger who was to accompany him back to France. This passenger was a short, fragile priest of the Jesuit Order, returning to the parent house in the old country after a long period of missionary service in the wilderness. The sea captain approved the wrinkled, weather-beaten face, with its ample forehead, its halo of pure white hair descending from the tonsured crown, and the keen, humorous eyes that twinkled under shaggy brows.

"The *Juliette* should have a happy voyage, Father," he said, "since she carries a holy man."

"Holy men, captain," replied the priest, the smile deepening in his eyes, "do not always have happy voyages in this world."

"Well," answered the captain, "if it be otherwise with the *Juliette* and we do not get safe to our harbor in France, at least with so excellent a pilot, we should make good weather after the world has done its worst with us."

Father Reville laughed softly and went below to stow his meager belongings in the cabin placed at his disposal. Up on deck he could hear the patter of hurrying feet and the sharp words of command. The windlass began to turn and the anchor chain to creak in the hawse pipes. Pulley blocks groaned shrilly, as the swiftly handled lines whistled through them, and there was a flapping as of great wings as the yards slatted and the big vessel gathered headway. Captain Halevy at the wheel maneuvered his vessel skilfully, taking advantage of every shift in the wind and every trick of the current, as he followed the windings of the river down to the Mexican Gulf. Then with a fair, free wind blowing over his quarter, he flattened sail and headed south and east toward the Florida Keys. They still bore the land on the larboard beam, when, several days after their departure, Father Reville, his "Book of Hours" in his hand, strolled up and down in the waist of the ship. The good priest started as he saw one of the life boats, lying keel up on the deck, move ever so slightly. At last the side of the boat was

raised a few feet, and a dark figure rolled out on the deck. As his quick eyes took in the stow-away, Father Reville exclaimed:

"Ha! An Indian."

"Yes," answered the man, who had now gained his feet and stood towering above the little priest.

"I am an Indian."

"But why were you hidden there?" the Father inquired. "No fire water?"

The Indian shook his head.

"No, Black Robe," he answered, "I drink no fire water. I would go to the big city the white men call Bordeaux."

A look of surprise came into the priest's eyes.

"Eh!" he said. "You would go to Bordeaux, my son? And why Bordeaux? 'Tis the flight of many eagles from the home of the red man."

The Indian shook his head.

"Rushing Water has no home," he said.

"Ah!" the priest answered him quickly and in the Delaware tongue. "My son is of the Algonquin people? He is not a southern man?"

The Indian was silent.

"Are you from the lake country?" the priest asked again.

With perfect gravity and without a trace of offense, in the simple manner of one who dis-

passionately states a commonplace, the warrior answered him:

"Rushing Water does not wish to speak of his home or his people. He has no people and no home."

"Hey! What have we here!" sounded a voice behind him. "Hello! It is my Indian. So this is the reason you asked for Bordeaux, that you might steal passage, hey?"

The captain spoke brusquely and his eyes were severe. Father Reville laid a gentle hand upon his arm.

"Let me plead for him, captain," he said. "He is one of those whom it is my business to save. See, he is strong and able, could he not give service in payment for his passage?"

Captain Halevy hesitated a moment, running his eyes over the lean and sinewy form of the young man.

"Humph!" he said. "If he knew how to handle a rope he might be useful. However, if you want him, Father, try to make a Christian of him, and as for me, perhaps I can make a sailor of him."

The priest explained rapidly in the Delaware tongue the purpose of the captain and was rewarded when a smile of pleasure appeared upon the dark features of the stowaway.

Rushing Water was led into the forecastle and

provided with a berth. The sailormen were interested rather than offended by the appearance of an Indian as a mess-mate, and they heartily entered into the task of teaching him the tricks of their trade. His quick intelligence, his deft hands, and the tremendous strength that lay in the coiled muscles of that supple body of his, soon made him a valuable member of the crew. He was quick as a cat on his feet.

Meanwhile, Father Reville having had a new task set for him by Providence, started with characteristic directness and eagerness to do this unexpected piece of missionary work.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE QUESTION

It was inevitable that the Jesuit priest and the Indian stowaway, whose presence and purpose on board the *Juliette* the former had so happily reconciled to the mind of the brusque but good-natured captain, would be thrown much together in the long voyage that lay before them—and this in spite of the different stations they were to occupy. The missionary zeal of the priest alone would sufficiently explain and vindicate any effort he might put forth to seek the company of Elan d'Eau; and as for the Indian himself, his innate love of the mystical would be sure to attract him to the man whose religious vocation was revealed by his dress and accentuated, without deliberate purpose on his part, by all his manner of life. There was this additional attraction, that the priest possessed a fair knowledge of the Indian tongue; and even of the very dialect in which Elan d'Eau was so thoroughly versed. In all their interviews an outside observer would have found much to whet the

hunger of an honest study in human character. The winsomeness of the priest was ill disguised by his accomplished diplomacy; and the rare caution and taciturnity of the young Indian but thinly veiled his growing fondness for the versatile churchman. Each had much to learn from the other; and the instinctive reverence which the good Father received from the untutored child of the forest was returned in something far deeper and truer than a condescending graciousness. Manhood is ever quick to recognize its kind!

The missionary, for the Jesuit is always that, was too wise to make his underlying wish obnoxious by resolving it into a constant point of contact. But from time to time there would fall from his lips, in the most natural way imaginable, such words of wisdom as reflect the truth more attractively than direct statements can present it. When one places a rose in the hand of a child it is not necessary to call his attention to the fact that the rose is beautiful. From time to time, also, brief questions would be put by the cautious yet venturesome mind of the young man which were the surface hints of thoughts deep as eternity.

Father Reville may, or may not, have known how thoroughly he was being studied by the keen mind he had taken to himself for the pleasure

of companionship and the good that might follow. The magnetic personality of the priest had rendered his every act and word a matter of supreme importance to the bronze-featured man whose mind and heart were equally busy in the search for a trail that would answer their mutual needs.

The wind which had been baffling most of the way to the southeast, necessitating long reaches back and forth across the soft gale blowing steadily from the south, was much more favorable when the *Juliette* swung to the north and took the breeze astern. The great gulf stream, pouring its warm current out into the Atlantic through the Florida Straits, gave added impulse now, and the fine ship, with studsails set, and every inch of canvas drawing steady and true, sent a purling fleecy roll out from each side of her cut water. She was steady as a rock, standing straight up, as she ran before the wind. The blue sea was smooth as a mill pond's unruffled breast.

In the shadow of the great foresail Elan squatted on the deck. Before him on a low bench sat Father Reville, his arms folded.

"Black Robe wears the totem of Manitu," said the young warrior, pointing to the ebony crucifix in the priest's belt.

"Yes, my son," the Jesuit replied, "Black Robe

wears the sign of the eternal God. God is his father, God is the father of Rushing Water."

"Then——," the young man smiled—"the red man is brother to the white?"

"All men who live are brothers," said the priest. "All are sons of God. And he loves them with a love beyond the love of an earthly father."

"Each one?" the brave asked eagerly. "Surely it is a thing that cannot be—men are so many; who can count them?"

"God is so great, he can count them," the priest answered. "See you, this rounded ocean! He set it in the hollows of the world, planning each huge wave, each tiny ripple. First he made the world on which it floats, designing the mountains and the rivers, the trees and each leaf thereon. And all the living things he made, and more, that huge sun rolling there, an everlasting torch to give us light, and each clear white star that Rushing Water sees at night, itself a distant world or a distant sun, he made all these. But, greater marvel still, he made you, the spirit in you that sees and knows. Does my son understand? There is something in your body that has wings, swifter than the wings of the eagle, it is called thought. Let me speak of the great lakes in the north and the thought of Rushing Water is there. Let me talk of the star, Ishtar the guide,

that dwells in the north sky, and the thought of Rushing Water is there. Does my son understand?"

The young man nodded.

"God made that—the thought that is winged," said the priest. "More, he made, the voice in Rushing Water's heart that says to him, 'This thing is right,' and 'This thing is wrong.' 'This thing is true,' and 'This thing is not true.' No tree has that, no beast, no ocean vast, nor huge blazing sun, only man, who is in the universe a mite like the bubble on the sea, only he has that knowledge of right and wrong—it is the soul in him, breathed into his body by the creator of all, and impressed with the likeness of God."

"'Tis a thought that is big," Rushing Water commented, "like this great water, like the cataract that foams over Niagara's rocky brown, like the sky, like the thunder of Manitu crashing when the clouds take fire."

"'Tis truth," said Father Reville. "No mere thought in the mind of man, but the true thing, made by God. Now let my son listen! This God, with a heart so deep and wide that even the winged thought of man can never measure it, has he not the power to love each man, though they be as the forest leaves in number? This God, in whose mind the universe is but as an island in the sea,

cannot he know each of his children? What father forgets the creature to whom he gave breath? Then shall not God love each of his creatures even more, to whom he has given not the breath that passes, but the spirit that lives forever?"

"And did God give his totem to the white people?" Rushing Water asked.

"To all—white, black, yellow, red, for the color of man's skin varies, but the color of his soul varies not."

"But the white people, they know God, Black Robe."

The old priest shook a sorrowful head. The answer forming on his lips was not uttered, for a sudden interruption called the young warrior from his side. It was some days thereafter before the conversation was resumed.

One day with a change in the watch Elan left his white companions, among whom he had ceased to be an object of friendly curiosity and become the recipient of undisguised respect, and strolled along the deck toward the favorite seat of the Jesuit in the shadow of the foresail. The latter was reading aloud from his breviary, but in a low and richly cultured voice, and as the musical phrases caught the Indian's equally musical ear, the latter paused and listened with evident de-

light. On the cadence and rhythm of those ancient petitions, his soul might seem to be wafted back to its forest home. The echoing laughter of brooklets, the triumphant tread of torrents, the soothing alternations of the midnight storm, the deep and thrilling stir of dawn—these and a hundred more of their kind, would seem to have filled his soul with their sweet obsession. Looking into his far-away eyes one might have said that Elan d' Eau was homesick; but looking more deeply still one might need to revise his opinion and believe that the spirit of prophecy had waved her enchanting wand over his awakening soul.

Though his step had been noiseless, and though no word had as yet been spoken, the priest soon became conscious of the Indian's presence, and looking up from his prayer book exclaimed:

"What brings you here, my son?"

It was one of those questions which answer themselves by the tone in which they are uttered.

"I am come, Black Robe, because it warms the current of my life to be where you are. In the heart of Elan d' Eau your friendship has awakened many echoes, such echoes as he has heard awakened in the heart of the woods by the voice of the song thrush when the shadows have lengthened on the hills. It is a friendship such as the heart of a lonely traveler fears not to trust. It is

a friendship that can stand the test of silent communion; as the forest lake is most beautiful in its calm. Your words have been to me like the music of rivulets; but your silent thoughts have blessed me as the tent of heaven. I have seen them in your eyes, and they shone like the stars at midnight! I know that Black Robe desires to lead the feet of Rushing Water into a new trail—a trail with which the feet of Black Robe have long been familiar. But he must know that the Indian mind loves its own way of thinking, and changes slowly. It must have firmly in its grasp the treasure of the new, before it will part with the treasure of the old. Old garments, though they be many times patched, are better than no garments when winter comes with its breath of ice. Old hunting grounds, though they be sorely consumed, are better for hope than the sterile sands of the desert. Old wigwams must not be burned, till the new ones are built. So teaches the Indian wisdom. Your friendship has been precious; your words have been sweet and comforting; your spirit talk seems wise. But Black Robe must not be angry with a poor untutored child of the forest, if he has many questions to ask before his feet can confidently enter the new trail which Black Robe would set for him.”

“Do you think that I have been unmindful of

the things you speak of, my son?" asked the priest.

"No, no," answered the young man, "the patience of Black Robe has been as the patience of a squaw for the child of her chief."

"Then what is the first question you would ask, my son?"

"Black Robe will not be angry?"

"Why does my son mistrust me?"

Leaning forward the young Indian took in his own hand the crucifix that hung at the girdle of the priest, and looking into the eyes of the latter with a deep and wistful gaze, he asked:

"If Black Robe will not be angry, what means this totem?"

There was something in the tone of the inquiry that saved the wise priest from too great an exultation; something that betokened, not a mere curiosity, but a personal interest, quite independent of any specifically religious intention. Looking frankly into the wondering eyes of the young brave he replied:

"Totem, you have not unwisely called it, my son. It stands for a family bond; but it has a depth of meaning far surpassing that of any similar token with which you have been familiar. It is the totem of a world-wide brotherhood: and it represents the love and sacrifice which alone were

capable of making that brotherhood a real fact upon the earth."

"But the warrior whose image is so beautifully wrought out—who was he?" asked the young man, with face as placid as a mountain lake, though the discerning ear of the priest seemed to catch the echoes of an inner excitement that was struggling to break the barriers of its restraint.

"Ah, my son, he was the Great Warrior—the one in whose presence all others must hang their heads in silence and humility, and many in sorrow and shame. Does my son desire to know the story?"

The young man bowed his assent, but also replied:

"If it please Black Robe to grant this favor, Rushing Water will be grateful and happy."

A sudden interruption caused both the priest and the warrior to glance at the quarter deck. M. Matisse was descending the companionway into the waist, his trumpet in his hand. He had just boomed out an order to shorten sail. Elan d' Eau turned on a quick heel.

"I am needed aft, Father," he said. "Tomorrow let it be, if the time suits."

"Tomorrow let it be, my son," answered the priest.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE ANSWER

At the appointed time Rushing Water was in his place; but not too early to be welcomed by Father Reville, with whom punctuality was a law of well-nigh sufficient importance to warrant its addition to the Decalogue. The young man, true to the rôle he had voluntarily assumed, started to place himself at the feet of the priest, when the latter with more of agitation than he was wont to betray, exclaimed:

“Nay, my son, not there; but here at my side, on the lid of this locker, where one man may look into the eyes of another, not upward nor downward, but on a level plane. Together we shall sit,—you, the red warrior, and I the white priest,—humble in mind and heart before the thought of the high priesthood of one concerning whom we have met to inquire: for he was both priest and warrior.”

Rushing Water seemed well pleased with this

remark and with true nobility of mien took his seat beside the Jesuit.

"Many, many years ago," said the latter, "and far to the eastward of that land toward which we are sailing, in a village called Bethlehem, was born the mighty warrior whose totem I wear. By command of the Great Spirit his parents named the child Jesus, which, in the language of that land and people meant Saviour, or Deliverer. He came to deliver his people not from the rule of a mighty nation that had conquered them and was holding them in the chains of its servitude; but he came to deliver them and all mankind from the bondage of their sins. For it was as true then as it is now that a man's most dangerous and cruel foes are those which lurk in the shadows of his own erring heart, and that wait there to lure him into their deadly ambush. And it was as true then as it is today that no one is so pitiably enslaved as he who remains subject to his own follies and fears."

The young man nodded assent, thereby showing both that he understood in some measure, at least the meaning of what had been said, and that he agreed to it.

"The night that he was born," resumed the priest, "the stars of heaven shone with a peculiar brightness. And ere he was laid for the first time on his fond mother's breast, a throng of heavenly

spirits filled the sky with a flood of light and song. This, my son, was the song they sang over the birthplace of the Great Papoose:

“ ‘Glory be to the Great Spirit who rules on high; and between all his children on earth may there come peace and a feeling of brotherhood.’

“The Papoose grew up like other children; but when he came to be twelve years of age, he revealed, as the day dawns in a cloudless sky, that he was different from others; that he was held by some stronger tie to the Great Spirit; that the Great Spirit had sent him to be the head warrior and medicine man of all tribes. When at last this child became a man the truth burst fully from him that he was the Great Spirit’s own son. Then it was that he went forth in the pathway of conquest, without either bow, or arrows, or shield, or spear, in his mighty hand; and without malice, or envy, or jealousy, or vengeance in his heart. The flowers of the field knew him and revealed to his soul their inmost beauty; the birds of the air knew him and sang their sweetest chorus into his listening ear; the children of the street knew him and cheered his soul with their laughter; good women saw him and loved him, because he was ever more tender than themselves; strong men followed him and loved him, because he was stronger than they. And these are but a portion

of the beautiful things that may be said of his life. But wicked men also knew him, and because they did not desire to forsake their wickedness, and because his teachings taught the world such ways as would shame their practices, they hated him and sought his destruction.

"But he kept to the trail that his Father had set for him, fighting cruelty with kindness, hatred with love, and the sins of mankind with the sorrows of heaven.

"Finally, they plotted against him, these wicked ones who had rejected him, and prepared to put him to death. So they made what we call a cross; and on that they slew him."

Here the priest lifted his own shining crucifix and with his forefinger traced the image of the cross.

"They made his cross of heavy pieces of wood, and compelled him to carry it from the place of their false pow-wow toward the place of his death; he fell to the ground beneath its weight; it was laid on the shoulders of a passing friend, and he was scourged to the scene of his torture; there they bound him to the cross, and to it they nailed him—a spike through each hand, as you see by the totem, and a spike through his feet! There the Great Warrior hung, when the cross was placed upright, suffering untold agony during six

long hours, while his own fond mother looked on with unspeakable anguish and the cruel crowd made sport of his dying. On his beautiful brow had been placed a crown of thorns as a symbol of mockery. And in return for all this deepening cruelty the Great Warrior uttered not one word of bitterness or anger; but looking straight toward heaven, he cried: 'Father, forgive them; they know not what they do!' Then he died; and while the earth was yet trembling from the shock of his death, the crowd began to awake and behold the meaning of their cruel deeds. One of them, himself a warrior, cried: 'Surely this man was the Son of Manitu!'

"My child, that death was a victory. It opened to the gaze of a hungry world the fathomless depths of the Great Father's love; and it has done more than all things beside to make the world happy in the practices of love and peace. The flowers of human happiness cannot find their richest bloom in the icy breath of vengeance and strife. Men are not animals made to bite and tear and devour each other; men are brothers, each to each—and all to all, despite the differences of their customs or the varying colors of their skin. All are the offspring of one eternal and almighty Father. The cup of human happiness will never be filled until the whole world

has come to know this wonderful but simple truth. But he who would wear the totem of this great brotherhood, and wear it sincerely, must be ready to follow the Great Sachem in the trail that led him to the cross!

"But think you, my child, that death was the end of that warrior? They gave his mangled body to his friends, who placed it, all covered with spices, in a rock-hewn grave. But think you that the grave could hold such as he? No, he burst asunder the bonds of death, as you have seen your own companions break the withes with which they were bound to make sport for their fellows. He rose from the sleep of death; and he proved to the hungry hopes of men that what you call The Happy Hunting Ground, and what we white brothers call Heaven is a blessed reality. He proved that the trail of life has no end!"

The priest paused, and to his astonishment saw the young Indian draw from beneath an inner garment a crucifix, the very counterpart of that which hung from his own waist, save that it had been carved and cut from a piece of purest crystal. It was a beautiful specimen both of nature and of art, and it was held for a moment where its angles caught the soft rays of a declining sun; it flashed with a light that seemed super-

nal. Rushing Water, his eyes gleaming with wonderment, laid this flashing symbol in the lap of the priest and almost breathlessly inquired:

"Does it mean, Black Robe, that this totem marks me out as a warrior kindred to him whom they slew upon the cross?"

For a long while the Jesuit sat speechless, examining the shining crucifix. The beautiful clarity of the crystal and the cunning carving of the figure of The Crucified, excited his admiration. One touch of color only he saw—a reddish-brown stain running through the feet of the Saviour and the upright of the cross. He thought at first that this stain was due to design but as he examined the spot more closely he saw that the carved head of the nail was not set in the stain but a little to one side. The stain was a streak of iron which had somehow been involved in the stalactite process from which the jewel had been cut. At last the priest looked up.

"It means, my son," said the faithful priest, "that we have here the suggestion of a path which I have not the wisdom to discover. Some one who knew you better than you know yourself, were that one of us, could answer your question in a way that might surprise and please us both. Do not part with this beautiful totem, my son; its presence will ever tend to draw you nearer to him

who died to make you his self-acknowledged brother; and it may hide in its luminous depths a secret that links you to a nobler past than that of which you know or dream. God's peace be with you, my son!"

CHAPTER XXV

THE STORM

So far the voyage had prospered. Except for the head winds encountered in the Gulf, the gale had favored the progress of the *Juliette* and she had averaged six knots on her way across the Atlantic. They had crossed the fortieth parallel and the seamen were already anticipating the joys of shore-leave in their native land, when the breeze, which had steadily driven them forward for many days, lost its vigor. Instead of the firm, continuous thrust, short gusty pushes filled out the canvas, which between times hung limp on the yard arms. Unwilling to sustain the unnecessary loss of an hour, Captain Halevy spread more canvas as the breeze slackened. The studsail yards were run out and made fast, and the great wings stretched to catch every ounce of wind. This helped a little, but despite it the speed of the vessel diminished. The breeze died, with a few quivering gasps. The water lay under the vivid blue of the sky, with a silken smoothness.

The great ship was motionless—she had left the Gulf Stream far to the westward, and no longer felt its impulse on her keel. The white sails hung limp on the yards. Captain Halevy, glancing aloft from the quarter deck to the flagstaff remarked with a grim smile to Father Reville, as he pointed to the sad rumple of the flag of France.

“A Dutchman’s hurricane, Father—up and down the mast.”

“’Tis wonderfully calm,” the priest replied.

“But not likely to be calm long,” said the captain, whose glance was sweeping the horizon. “M. Matisse, my glass, if you please!” he shouted to his first officer.

The sailor leaped down a hatch to the cabin, returning with a telescope. Resting it on a life-boat aswing on the davits, the captain surveyed the eastern sky.

“Ha!” he exclaimed, “I thought as much. M. Matisse, we shall take in sail, studsails first.”

Father Reville, looking to the east, noted an obliteration of the horizon. He turned a questioning glance on the captain.

“It looks bad, Father,” said the captain, answering his unuttered question. “We have lots of sea room, however, although I hate to run back.”

Even as they looked, the haze in the east deepened into a thick gloom, and with incredible speed

tumbling black clouds came sweeping across the blue heavens. The air was silent, tense, oppressive. The sea lost its blue brightness and took on an aspect of green, gray terror, broken afar off by bursts of white spume. Captain Halevy, with a sigh, prepared to strip his ship of canvas.

"Down to the bare poles. We shall have to run for it, Monsieur Matisse," he said.

Matisse seized the speaking trumpet.

"Stand by to furl the topsail!" he shouted, his voice sounding unnaturally loud in the deep silence.

Instantly the topsail yards were manned, and Father Reville, looking up, saw the dark figure of Rushing Water outlined against the sky at the topmast head. With a little thrill of admiration, he noted the grace of the pose and the perfect self-confidence that kept the man secure on his perilous perch. Again Matisse's voice rang out.

"Down-haul, all!"

There was a rattle as the down-haul creaked and the sail was furled against its spar. His trumpet in his hands, Matisse was now snapping out swift, whip-like commands, under whose impulse the men scrambled up the shrouds and manned the main yards. At last the great lower sails were furled and lashed to their yards, and the ship, stripped like a gladiator for conflict, await-

ed the onrushing storm. As they watched it from the quarter deck, it seemed as if sea and sky were one, the clouds descending and the sea rising, to form a vast black mass bearing down upon them in its fury. With a sudden roar it was upon them.

Captain Halevy, gripping the taffrail and leaning forward, alert, sensed the instant of impact, and sharp through the shriek of the gale, rang out his high command:

“Hard a-lee!”

As the helm bore across the deck and the vessel, gathering life from the impact of the hurricane, obeyed the rudder's direction and swung on her heel to spring forth like a race-horse before the driving wind, a great sea rose astern, seemed to pause, a huge impending, green-gray thing of terror, then broke in a fury of snow-white foam, and crashed down upon the vessel. Under the blow the *Juliette* quivered like a living thing, and as the smother of foam streamed over her, staggered like a man with a broken back. Halevy, who had joined the two seamen at the helm, held his breath for a minute, then as his ship steadied and rose on the next swell with her buoyance, he breathed a sigh of relief. His trumpet was at his lips and his voice rang out again.

"M. Matisse!" he called, "report to me at once whether anyone was carried away!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the officer's answer, faint in the roar of the elements.

Within a few minutes his dripping form stood at Halevy's side.

"Seaman Leroux had his leg broken and has been carried below," he reported. "Otherwise all hands are accounted for. The forecastle hatch was smashed in, but no further damage seems to be done."

"We are not taking water?" asked the captain.

"Not a drop, sir," the officer answered cheerfully.

"'Twas a close squeak," said Halevy grimly, "but I think we'll weather it now."

The gloom was intense. Halevy leaned forward, straining his eyes, but could see nothing ahead but the black ruck of the storm and the white crests of the towering waves, which now thrust them high and now buried them deep in the trough of the waters. They were traveling at a fearful speed. Thunder crashes, peal on peal, furnished profound subtones for the high pandemoniac scream of the winds in the rigging. Sharp, blazing shafts of lightning tore raggedly through the clouds and gave brief and weird illu-

mination to the violent desolation in which they blindly careered. Looking forward in one of these sudden bursts of unearthly light, Halevy saw a strange figure outlined against the gloom.

Father Reville clinging with one hand to the glistening forestay, his face uplifted and his hair startlingly white in the lightning's ghastly illumine, stood at the very prow of the boat. His black gown against the darkness of the storm made his body almost invisible, but the face with its crown of white glory and the hand clutching the cordage, stood out in sharp definition. Halevy heard an exclamation in the guttural Indian tongue at his side. The priest had taken his hand from the stay and both hands were now clasped before him. There was a sudden fierce and furious gust and the two hands and white face seemed lifted into the air.

All this occurred in an instant; the lightning glare vanished, and the blackness of the storm enshrouded all. Looking around, the captain saw the gloom thicken at his side, and a dark bulk arose from the rail and disappeared. Matisse's voice came faintly to his ears, sounding the dread cry:

"Man overboard!"

The captain gritted his teeth, full of wild rage at his own helplessness. The storm drove him

on and on. Twice, with the full knowledge in his heart of the utter impossibility of it, he tried to bring his vessel around, only to be beaten back each time by the staggering buffets of the huge seas and the irresistible thrust of the driving wind. At the first signal he had ordered everything buoyant cast adrift, and ready hands flung over the side in a frantic hope that they might be of help to the unfortunate, life boats, buoys, hatch covers—whatever came to hand that might sustain a human body on the face of the water. Halevy still clinging with his seamen to the thrashing helm, still striving to pierce the wild gloom ahead, murmured under his breath the prayer for the dying.

The tempest passed as suddenly as it came. A wan light shone astern, the blackness ahead became gray. There was a final terrific shrieking rush of mighty winds, then a quavering wail, then silence. The gray wreck tore on, the last clouds hung like stragglers in the sky, the sunlight burst again upon the troubled sea. For half an hour there was a dead calm, then a light breeze sprang up, coming out of the north. Instantly Captain Halevy ordered every stitch of canvas spread to the breeze and turning on his heel, he retraced his course over the waters. Hour after hour they

sailed, a lookout at each masthead searching the sea for the lost ones.

The night came on, beautiful, clear, brilliant with starlight. All through the dark hours the voice of the lookout called forth over the sea, and the *Juliette* gleamed with lanterns hung astern and astem. There was no answering voice coming to them out of the night. The stars paled and the dawn came, and with its first gleam the lookout's voice sounded dismally from the clouds of canvas aloft, as he announced the tidings that nothing was visible on the face of the waters. When noon came and the sorrowing little company seemed all alone on the vast reaches of the sea, the captain gave up hope.

"Ah, M. Matisse," he said to his first officer, "those were two brave spirits that have passed into eternity. Call all hands on deck. We are Christian people, and if the priest has gone and the savage with him, we shall make shift at least to supplicate the good God in their behalf."

Soon a strange scene, which there was no human eye to see, presented itself on the deck of the great ship. Save for the two helmsmen at the tiller and the lookout clinging to the topmast head, all the ship's company were gathered on the deck. They were rough seamen, many of them with faces and bare, brown hands covered with tattooed designs,

and some of them with gold earrings glittering in the sunlight. Holding a little prayer book in his hand, the captain strode among them. Suddenly he sank to his knees on the deck and instantly the sailors knelt in a circle around him. Then in a deep voice Captain Halevy read the litany for the dead, and in deeper and rougher chorus the sailors gave responses. The water lapped the ship's sides, and the breeze above them freshened, filling the sails, while from simple hearts, grieved at the loss of a revered priest and a comrade upon whom they had bestowed their unquestioning affection, rose the devout antiphony.

"Lord have mercy on them," read Captain Halevy.

"Christ have mercy on them," the deep sea voices answered.

Suddenly, from above the billowing canvas where the lookout clung to the cross trees, there came a cry. The men hurriedly touched with their right hands forehead and breast, right shoulder and left, and rose to their feet, and Captain Halevy shouted up to the lookout:

"What is it you see?"

"'Tis only a speck, sir, dead ahead," said the lookout. "It isn't a ship, it looks like a piece of wreckage."

In breathless suspense they waited while the

ship forged ahead, and the speck grew larger and larger in the lookout's sight.

"I make it now, sir," he yelled down at last, his voice full of joy. "It is a piece with two men clinging to it."

Crowding on every inch of canvas, Halevy hurried the pace of his ship until she bore down at last on the object which had attracted the lookout's attention. It was a huge hatch cover which had been hurled overboard during the height of the storm. With his body stretched across it, his legs hanging in the water, Father Reville lay. Beside him, one sinewy hand clutching his collar, sat Rushing Water.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE BATTLE WITH DEATH

That fierce dark onset of elemental anger found the Jesuit in the waist of the ship. As the gray wall of water rose astern and crashed down like a sweeping charge of white cavalry, he clutched a taut stay and clung desperately to the rigid rope. The onrush of the sea dragged at him savagely but he held fast, and the hurried waters rushed by. Drenched but unhurt he heard Captain Halevy's inquiry and Matisse's report. Then he made his way forward in the gloom. The old man's eyes were bright with interest. To the mind that dwelt constantly on things eternal, this huge sweep of things beyond human control had a wild magnificent charm.

"Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil," he murmured, smiling to himself with the thought that there was within him a soul that could ride unterrified in the storm, superior to nature because supernatural in its origin, its essence, and its destiny. Making his

way forward along the wet, heaving deck, he reached the short forecastle ladder. Clambering up this, he lurched forward to the peak. His hand rested on the foremast stay, and he steadied himself to watch the sublime spectacle, the thunderbolt's swift, uncertain flight through the dark, the huge, onrushing waves with furious white plumes, ghostly in the murk, gleaming in the blue-white glare. A minute or so he stood there, his spirit filled with the grandeur of it. Involuntarily he took his hand from the stay and raised both hands before him in a gesture of adoration. A sword of flame had shorn the tumbling smoky clouds, and the deafening crash of its peal was in his ears. Suddenly he was lifted up as if invisible hands had clutched him, and hurled into the sea. He saw the ship's dark shape rush by, saw it mount a vast wave and drop from his sight.

Old though he was, there was strength in the spare frame of the priest. He realized his situation, nor dreamed of possible succor in that wild tempest, but it was his duty to prolong life to the utmost, and so, more from the sense of obligation than from any physical instinct of self-preservation, he did his best to keep afloat. It was grim business. Flung high one instant by a breaker, sucked deep into its fast following trough the next,

his breath was soon spent. He felt the water close over his head. He was still conscious when he came again to the surface, and with a final summoning of all his remaining strength he threw up his white head, and his voice rang out:

"Into thy hands, O Lord, I deliver my spirit!"

The cry of surrender spent him and the sea surged again above his nostrils. But, as he sank there was a tremendous threshing of the waters not far off, and his white hair still floated when a sinewy hand gripped his collar. As consciousness departed, a strong voice sounded in his ears:

"I am here, Black Robe," it said.

The faintness passed and recurred several times, and with each flash of consciousness, the feebly working mind of the priest had an impression of some extraneous power that was keeping him afloat. At last a sense of physical pain came to him, the feeling of contact with a hard substance, of something tearing his flesh, and tugging at his arms. With an effort he rallied his faculties. The storm was still raging, his opened eyes looked up at a black heaven. He felt a hard substance under him and realized that it was a plank. A nail had torn the flesh of his thigh. At the edge of the plank he saw Rushing Water's head, and he became conscious that the warrior was clutching his robe with one hand, while he gripped

the edge of the plank with the other. Leaning his body forward the young man tested the buoyancy of their support. When satisfied he clambered up on it, seating himself beside the body of the priest. What they rested on was a great hatch cover, one of the many articles thrown over side at Halevy's command.

The storm passed at last, but the wild heaving of the sea made it a matter of some difficulty to keep the priest from slipping into the waves. Rushing Water sat, his eyes searching the empty ocean, one hand hooked in the collar of the Jesuit's robe, the other gripping the plank. The evening came and night shut down upon them. The sea grew calmer. Far above them the cold stars shone. The lassitude following his struggle had kept the priest silent, but when the night came he spoke.

"How came my son to be in the sea?" he asked.

"Rushing Water is a strong swimmer," the young man answered simply. "From his boyhood he has been such. When the wind swept the Father from the bow, the warrior leaped over the rail astern. He hoped he might find his friend."

Father Reville's eyes opened wide in wonder.

"But the storm was at its height. You might have lost, indeed you still may lose your life."

"Did not the Father tell me," asked the young

man, "that in the great brotherhood of the followers of the Christ, if a man would save his life he must first lose it? A sagamore said that, did he not?"

"True!" replied the priest. "My son is quick to grasp. But we are likely to find life soon, the eternal life," he added. "My son has no fear?"

The eyes that gazed down at him answered the question. With a satisfied smile, the priest closed his eyes. Weariness overcame him and he slept. The sun was bursting red above the rim of the sea when he awoke. It lighted a vast and lonely ocean. The priest gazed at his companion, who sat rigid, his jaw set, and the fierce intentness of one who fights off sleep in his eyes.

"You must rest," said the priest. "Let me hold you now. I have slept. I am refreshed."

He tried to raise himself but sank back. The effort made his head swim. A faintness came upon him. Several times when reason awoke he saw that grim figure, with the tense set features and the eyes that fought against sleep. The sun beat down on them. The priest seemed alone in a world of yellow light that closed in upon him. It was a vague, flickering, contracting circle of consciousness, but dominating it ever was the set,

strong face of his companion. At last even that grew dim. Suddenly he felt the grip on his collar tighten and heard the warrior's voice:

"Courage, Father," it said. "Courage, I see a sail."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE NEW LIFE

Quickly the davit swung outboard, and already manned was the life boat when the creaking tackle dropped it on the sea. Matisse in the stern handled the steering oar and bent forward eagerly as he urged the rowers to speed. They needed little urging for each of them realized what desperate tenacity had held the two men on that frail raft, and they could guess that the point of exhaustion was near at hand. The bow of their good sea boat surged through the waves, rising and falling, ever nearer to the two stiff figures on the hatch cover. At last Matisse shouted hoarsely to the straining oarsmen:

“Avast! Hold all!”

The oars gurgled in the sea and the boat came to a stop. Matisse shot forth a quick hand and grasped the robe of the priest. Another instant and the form was lifted over the gunwale and laid in the bottom of the boat. Two sailors assisted Rushing Water, and soon the row boat was speeding back to the side of the *Juliette*.

Father Reville was carried up the short side ladder and deposited on the deck. Close behind him came his rescuer. As the young man stepped on the deck, Captain Halevy glanced at him keenly. For an instant the warrior stiffened his splendid form and stood erect, then his limbs began to tremble. The sinews softened, his red and blazing eyes glared around wildly and his hands reached out with a weak, groping gesture. Halevy leaped toward him, but before he could reach him a queer, weak, little sob broke from the cracked lips of the young man, and he staggered a step and lurched headlong to the deck.

Quickly his messmates gathered round him and lifting him they carried him below, as they had a few minutes before carried the unconscious priest.

The cabin assigned to Father Reville opened on the companionway at the foot of the ladder leading to the spar deck. There was an open port at one end and a door at the other. A bunk seven feet long by two feet wide was attached to the bulkhead, and opposite this rude berth was the chair that formed the single article of movable furniture in the cabin. It was in this compartment that Father Reville recovered consciousness on the morning after the rescue. His first thought was for his Indian friend, and as Captain Halevy

stood by his side he made immediate inquiry. The captain shook his head.

When consciousness had returned to Rushing Water, it was a strange incoherent consciousness, crowded with phantoms. His amazed comrades stood around him as he tossed in his hammock, ready to hold him should his violence threaten injury to himself. They looked upon him with deep sympathy when the sobs came from him, broken and bitter like those of a strong man in extreme agony, and their faces showed wonder when suddenly his voice would rise in high, quick exclamations in the Delaware tongue.

This the captain explained to the Jesuit. The priest's face darkened with concern and he swung himself out of the berth.

"No, you must not do that, Father," the captain protested. "You are still too weak. He is getting every attention."

But the Jesuit standing with his hand on the bulkhead, to steady himself, shook his head.

"My weakness shall soon pass," he said. "Aye, I am better now, my mind clears. Your arm, Captain, I must go to him."

Captain Halevy encircled with his muscular arm the frail form of the missionary and supported him to the sick bay where Rushing Water lay in his hammock. A weather-beaten, thin-fea-

tured sailorman was acting as nurse. His great, hairy arms, tattooed to the shoulder, were bare, a bright red kerchief was tied around his neck in a loose knot, and huge earrings dangled from his ears. His small eyes looked out of a wrinkled face upon which was a thatch of thick, gray hair. Father Reville noticed that although his hands were rough and knotty, they caressed with almost a woman's gentleness the throbbing forehead of the sick man.

"How fares our friend, Jules?" the captain asked.

The gray head was shaken dolefully.

"It seems a bad business, sir," he answered. "If I could only understand what he says, I might do something for him. But it is all, as you hear, wild raving in that heathen tongue of his. Sometimes he sobs like a baby, sir, and sometimes he shouts out like a fleet commander."

The priest took the place of the sailor by the side of the hammock and laid a hand on the brow of the sufferer.

"I would have him in my cabin, Captain," he said. "Let him be laid in my berth."

"But you, Father! You are not strong enough——" the captain began.

"Strength is not of the body, my son, but of the spirit," the priest answered, "and the God

who gave him strength to battle with the deep, will give me what strength I need."

They carried the young man into the priest's small cabin and laid him in the berth. There Father Reville, who like many of the missionaries of his Order and of his day was a physician as well as a priest, began to nurse him back to health. Cold water from over the side he had brought to him in huge buckets, and with this he bathed the form of the sick man until the cooled blood gave the natural vitality of the young warrior a chance to fight.

It was a long struggle, however, and nearly two weeks had gone by before the priest dared to hope that the grim reaper had been beaten. He himself was showing by this time the strain under which he labored. His spare frame was more attenuated than ever, and his face seemed almost transparent. His patient that morning seemed to sleep with less distress showing in quivering features and tossing, restless limbs.

Captain Halevy looked in through the door of the tiny cabin.

"Good morning, Father," said the sailor in a whisper. "How is our hero this morning?"

Father Reville rose and tiptoed to the door.

"I think we gain a little, Captain," he said. "The poor boy, but for his youth and more than

common strength, would have paid with his life for that plunge into the sea. You do well to speak of him as a hero, Captain. I remember his voice as it came to me in the sea through the roar of the storm. It was calm and full and firm. There was no fear in it."

The priest had stepped over the door sill and the captain got him by the arm.

"Father," he said, "this poor fellow has been much in my thoughts. What he did that night is a thing a man cannot easily forget. When I saw you lifted from the deck and carried out into the darkness, my heart sank, and then he left my side and went over the rail after you, into the black desolation, without a pause to think how minute was the chance of success. It was an astounding thing. Do you know, Father Reville, I have followed the sea for a great many years and have had the honor of serving my King on the field of battle, but that was an act of daring beyond any I have ever seen. It is more like the splendid folly of which we read in the old days of chivalry, when the good knights bound themselves to care nothing for life as against the call of honor and the possibility of service."

For a few minutes the priest was silent and then he replied:

"Captain, I have been on my Father's business

among the red men of America for many years, and I have never known another Indian like this man. It is true that the race has some noble attributes but they are more like the nobilities of all savage peoples whom I have so far encountered. Their spirit of sacrifice is tainted with pride. They endure not for another but for their own glory, and while they have these generous feelings, which I have no doubt a sympathetic civilization might cultivate into great traits, they lack the gentle graces that crop out so often in the conduct of this boy. Have you ever noted, Captain, how this Indian laughs?"

"Aye," said the captain. "He laughs easily, and I think that very laughter of his, which is so merry and so true, is what has won for him the hearts of our sailors. Surely, I never before saw seamen so taken with one of an alien race."

Father Reville sighed a little and looked over his shoulder at the face of the slumbering man. Captain Halevy drew him gently out on the deck.

"Come, Father," he said, "you must have a little rest. I shall call Jules to watch by his side, for he sleeps now, and you come with me up above and let's take a turn under the open sky. You haven't seen it these many days."

The priest glanced back at his patient. For a second he hesitated, and then, as Jules came run-

ning forward, he nodded and accompanied Captain Halevy up the companion ladder. The captain drew out an easy chair for him and set it on the deck in the sunshine. The day was clear and bracing. The sky was a blue immensity, unflecked by floating clouds. The warm sunlight tempered the snappy, chilling breeze that came from the northern seas.

"There," said the captain, as he wrapped a rug around the feet of the priest. "Put your head back and close your eyes. Breathe in a little of this air. It is like wine, full of life. It has the snap of the north in it, Father. There is nothing like the north to put real life in the air, and the life of the air is the life of the blood. Don't you think so, Father?"

But the priest did not answer. His breast was rising and falling gently, and his eyes were closed. The crucifix released from his thin, delicate fingers, slipped gently to the deck beside him. A look of satisfaction settled on the face of the sailor, and he sat on a coil of rope beside the sleeping Jesuit.

The sun sloped up to the zenith where it seemed to hold itself a while, like a gull that soars to rest his wings, and then began its decline toward the western wave. Still Father Reville slept. Toward evening the freshening breeze brought an added

chill to the air, and the attentive ship's master procured another rug which he placed over the sleeper.

Suddenly a sweet, bird-like trill floated up from the companionway. The priest stirred uneasily. Captain Halevy started, a look of inquiry on his brow and as he listened the note sounded a second time, and the priest opened his eyes.

"Ah!" he said, and there was new strength in his voice. "That is the voice of the thrush."

"The thrush?" There was perplexity in the voice of the captain.

"Yes," exclaimed the priest, jumping to his feet. "'Tis an Indian call. I must go down to Rushing Water."

He hurried down the companion ladder, the captain at his heels. Jules looked up, with his finger on his lips, as they entered the cabin.

Quickly Father Reville caught the wrist of the sick man with one hand while he laid the other on the warrior's brow.

"Ha!" he said. "The fever comes again. Jules, bring me a bucket of water quickly."

The sick man stirred and the priest bent forward to listen.

"Humming Bird," murmured Rushing Water, in the Delaware tongue, "Oh, Humming Bird!

Not here!—Not there!—Where, oh, Humming Bird!”

Suddenly he raised himself on his elbow, his eyes wide open now, and glared at Captain Halevy who stood at Father Reville’s shoulder.

“Stop!” he commanded, his voice high and imperative. “Ish-to-ba, stop! Thou shalt not! Dog, it is the third time!” His right arm was uplifted as if it held a tomahawk.

At a sign from Father Reville, Captain Halevy stepped out of the room. The warrior sat bolt upright in the berth.

“Humming Bird!” he cried. “I am Humming Bird’s warrior. Where, oh, Humming Bird!”

Again he raised the thrush pipe. As it died away he trembled and sank back on his pillow.

“Humming Bird!” he cried brokenly. “Not here!—Not there!—Where, oh, Humming Bird!”

By now Jules had returned with the bucket of cold sea water and Father Reville was applying it to the fevered body. Under his ministrations the temperature of the sick man slowly went down, and again an untroubled sleep came to him.

The young man’s delirium did not again return. He slept peacefully and quietly throughout the night. And the next morning when the Father

stood beside his hammock, the young man looked up at him with sane eyes.

"Rushing Water is very ill, Father," he said.

"My son is better now," the priest answered.

With an odd little motion the warrior raised a weak hand, then looked at it.

"No," he said, "Rushing Water has run his course. He is like the river that pours itself into the ocean. He is near the ocean."

"My son deceives himself," said the priest. "He is stronger. He will be stronger than he was before the sickness came upon him."

For a minute the young man lay quiet looking at him.

"See, Father," he said suddenly, again raising his hand and thrusting it out toward the priest. Father Reville looked at it in astonishment.

"What is there to see, my son?" he asked.

"It grows white," answered the sick man.

A strange look came into the priest's eyes.

"What is this?" he asked.

"Listen," said the young man. "When the mother of Rushing Water died she gave him Manitu's message. She said that because he was selected for a great work for his people, he must perform certain rites. He must crush the tumeric root and distill the stain and bathe himself in it.

Should he fail to do this his body would become pale, and death would come upon him."

"What!" exclaimed the priest, in an intense, eager voice. "Tell me of this, my son."

"Rushing Water has always obeyed," was the answer. "When he left his people and came down the long river in his canoe, each morning he went alone into the woods and performed his rites. Before he came on board the great ship he gathered much tumeric and made such stain, and this he hid away. But for many sleeps now he has had no stain. See! the words of Outanie come true. His skin whitens. The course of Rushing Water is run."

"And that crystal," said the priest, bending over him and pointing to the cross now visible through the opening in the breast of his shirt. "Whence came that?"

"Oh!" said the boy. "The totem of Manitu. Outanie put it on Rushing Water's neck and bade him wear it."

"Then I, too, as you have seen," said the priest, "wear the totem of Manitu. I am a medicine man and a sagamore, and the Great Spirit speaks to me in many ways of mystery, and I say to you by His voice that you shall not die, but shall live a new life."

CHAPTER XXVIII

“LAND, HO!”

Rushing Water's convalescence was rapid. The fever that had resulted from his exposure and exhaustion soon yielded to the simple medicaments of the Jesuit priest, and the splendid vitality of the young man's body. Father Reville watched his recovery with impatience. The priest had a great secret to tell this young man, but feared to make his disclosure until his patient had sufficient strength to bear whatever shock the news might carry. Satisfied in this respect at last, Father Reville began his conversation very quietly:

“My son is strong again,” he said one morning as he sat beside the hammock.

“Yes,” the warrior answered, “Rushing Water is strong; he should be up above at his work and not here.”

“All in good time,” said Father Reville, smiling at Rushing Water's impatience. “Tomorrow you may leave your hammock and resume your work, but today I have something to tell you.”

"What is it, Father?" the young man asked quietly.

"On the morrow," said the priest, "if the wind holds true, we shall sail into the harbor of Bordeaux. Does my son wish to stay with the ship or to see the country of the white people?"

"Rushing Water would dwell awhile in the woods of the white people," the young man answered.

The Jesuit smiled. "There are still some woods in the land of the white people, my son," he said, "but most of the land is great farms, and cities with houses built side by side, all crowded together. My son would walk many miles in this city of Bordeaux without seeing any woods."

Rushing Water's eyes looked puzzled.

"It would be difficult to follow a trail then," he said, "in this city? Black Robe knows what I mean. It would be hard to find a person."

"Very hard," the priest assented.

"Yet it might be done?"

"Oh, yes! It might be done, but what I wish to speak to you about is this: You are going into a white people's country. You should not feel strange there, for my son is no true Indian. His blood is the blood of the white people, his skin is the skin of the white people, only a stain kept it dark like the skin of an Indian."

Rushing Water drew a deep breath.

"Black Robe means," he said, speaking very slowly, "that I am not an Indian; that—I—am—a—white—man?"

"It is true, my son," the priest answered.

"How can it be?" Rushing Water cried, running his hand across his forehead. "I am the son of an Indian father and an Indian mother. How can my blood be white?"

"Has not my son known one of the red women to take a babe, whose mother had been killed, and care for it and nurse it?" asked the priest. "Suppose an Indian woman should find a white babe whose mother and father had been killed, and should grow to love it and wish to bring it up with all the affectionate care she might bestow on her own son? Suppose she feared that if the babe grew up with the white skin among the Indians, his happiness and even his life might be endangered? Would she not stain the child's skin, and would she not teach him, as a means of preserving his own life, to continue the practice, when her loving hands were powerless to aid him further?"

With a quick, shrewd glance Rushing Water searched the face of the priest.

"And this, then, is why my hands have been

getting white?" he asked, raising up his hands before him.

Father Reville nodded. For a long time there was silence. "Poor Outanie," murmured the young man at last.

"What do you say, my son?" asked the priest.

"I thought of one I had loved who was a red woman, Father," the young man answered. "But now," he added, his eyes brightening, "I think of other things. I think of a wonderful world."

"With God's help it is yours to conquer," said the priest smiling. "But listen, my son! You will enter this new world almost as helpless as a baby. You have been trained in the ways of the wilderness, to hunt wild animals and take your living from the things that dwell in the woods. Now you will go into a world where such knowledge is of little value. You have strength of body and that is a great thing. But you have more, you have a mind capable of knowing what the wise men of the white race know, of learning to read the great books wherein their sagamores of the past have preserved the wisdom and traditions of ages long gone. Some little I can do to help you enrich your mind. It will be but a beginning. Most of the work you must do for yourself. Listen, my son! In this city of Bordeaux is one of the houses of my Order. Let me bring you

into that house an Indian and send you forth therefrom a white man. Let us say nothing to these dear friends of ours on board this ship, of our discovery, nor indeed let us tell no man. Come with me when we land in Bordeaux tomorrow, and you shall learn to read and write the language of the French people and to speak it, so that when you go forth to do your own work the words of those among whom you travel shall not be a darkness in which you can see no meaning."

The grateful look in the eyes of Rushing Water showed how deeply he appreciated this offer of assistance. He gladly assented to the plan the priest proposed, and during the rest of the day the two friends chatted together of plans for the future, as Rushing Water lay in his bunk and the old priest sat beside him.

"You are a strange man, Black Robe," said Rushing Water, "sagamore and preacher and healer of the sick, carer for the stranger and teacher of the ignorant."

"We were bidden," the priest answered with a smile, "by a great sagamore and a great saint, to be 'all things to all men.' I am all that you have said, and in addition to this a woodsman and a traveler in a far land. It is the pride of our Order that such we are. I am willing to be anything,—I am upon my Master's business."

For an instant the old eyes flashed. Rushing Water had never seen a warrior boast of his prowess, who held his head more proudly than the old man at his side.

Light breezes on the Bay of Biscay were wafting the *Juliette* still westward on the following morning, when the deep voice of the lookout rang out with the glad cry of

“Land, Ho!”

“Where away?” came the quick inquiry from Captain Halevy.

“Off the starboard bow,” came the answer from the masthead.

“That would be the Isle d’Oleron if my reckoning be true,” said Captain Halevy. “Monsieur Matisse, we shall bring her head more to the south! Within a few hours, Father,” he said, turning to the priest cheerfully, “we should be land-locked.”

Rushing Water, still a trifle unsteady on his feet, heard the first officer’s sharp order, “Tacks and sheets!” and saw his companion haul the weather side of the yards aft, as the helm went over and the head of the ship came up into the wind. He sprang into the shrouds to get a glance at this strange land he was now rapidly approaching. As they drew into the wide jaws of the estuary into which the Garonne discharges its placid

flow, Father Reville keenly watched the face of his protégé. He saw his glance shift quickly and incessantly from one point of interest to another, resting now on the yellow sand spit projecting into the sea, and now on the little cluster of white cottages inside the harbor, where the fishing village of Rován gleamed in the westering sun against the rich summer green of burdened orchards and cultivated fields.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE HAND AND THE HANDKERCHIEF

The house of François Dupont et Fils was a well established mercantile house in Bordeaux. The original François, who had established the business, was long since dust in the quiet graveyard of St. Madeleine, and his son, who was his first partner, was now a very ancient gentleman, living comfortably on the profits of a long mercantile career, and seldom visiting the quaint old business quarters in which his grandsons were energetically prosecuting the ancestral enterprise.

In the beginning this concern dealt in Oriental commodities carried from the East in the bottoms of the enterprising Genoese and Venetians, and trans-shipped at these Adriatic ports for Bordeaux. As the American trade became profitable, the astute descendants of old François turned their eyes to the westward, and they soon were leaders in the trade in American furs. Their counting house faced the bustling Rue St. Louis in the heart of the business quarter of the city. They were in a quaint old gabled house, with time-stained walls

and great square windows, each composed of small squares of glass. Through these windows might be seen heaps of beautiful furs, the pelts of beaver, otter, lynx, silver fox, mink and buffalo, while here and there the tawny skin of the tiger was hung as a reminder of the original source of the firm's commodities. The barred doors were open to admit the air, for the spring day was unduly warm, and bright sunshine lay in bars across the bare, brown floor. A great oaken counter, almost black from age, ran the full width of the office. Behind this were high desks of the same material, at which the ink-stained clerks sat, some of them bending over huge ledgers, while others were busy with great heaps of invoices and bills of lading. In the wareroom, back of the office, workmen were busy, softly beating stretched skins with padded mallets.

In one corner of the counting room, at a square desk, sat Monsieur Gabriel Dupont, the present head of the house. His outer aspect was eloquent of prosperity. The bald and shining poll, the small, shrewd eyes, the rubicund cheeks and triplicate chin bespoke a life of rich food, and Monsieur Gabriel's clothing, with costly lace at throat and cuffs, and gold-buckled shoes indicated the man of wealth.

It was into this office that Father Reville, Jesuit

missionary, recently returned from America, walked one morning with Rushing Water. He was no longer Rushing Water, however. In adopting the new faith and assuming his rightful rôle of a white man, he had chosen to bear the name of his benefactor, and he came forth into the world, after nine months of study under the Jesuits, as Elan Reville.

Monsieur Gabriel looked at him with interest, for he made a distinguished figure, with his hair, brown now that the stained bear grease was no longer upon it, tied with a ribbon at the back of his head, his quiet, brown suit cut to fit his lean, lithe frame, and his silver shoe buckles brightly polished.

"Ah!" said the merchant, advancing to welcome the two visitors. "Father Reville, you are welcome indeed. We have seen little of you since your return from the wilderness."

"I have been busy," the priest answered. "But my old friend Gabriel seems to have borne my absence remarkably well. Life has gone well with him?"

"Not badly, not badly, Father," said the merchant. "As you may see, the years have put plenty of flesh on my bones, although they have been less generous with my old school-mate."

"One of my calling," the priest answered with

a smile, "has little need for much flesh, Gabriel. It was sometimes hard enough for me to get this poor bag of bones transported without wishing to add to the burden of my porters. But the Lord blesses each of us in the way best suited to us. How is Madame Dupont, and how are the children?"

"Most prosperous, Father," the merchant answered, "and glad they will be when you get time to visit our home. But come in and be seated, you and your friend!"

He bustled about to set chairs for them. When they had seated themselves, the priest said:

"Well, Gabriel, I have a favor to ask of you. This is a namesake of mine, Monsieur Elan Reville, who has been in America. He has been a hunter and trader and I think might be of some service to your business. At any rate, my friend, I want you to give him a chance."

Monsieur Gabriel looked the stranger over shrewdly.

"Ah! So you have been a hunter?" he said.

"Here!—he picked up a skin from a great pile from beside his desk, "What pelt is that?"

"I don't know," answered Elan promptly.

Monsieur Gabriel beamed with approval.

"Of course, you would not know," he said, "that is not an American skin, at least not a North

American skin; that is a puma pelt from the south. But this one; you know this one?"

Elan smiled. "Very well," he said, "that is beaver."

"Right. And this?"

"Black bear."

"Quite right. And this one?"

"Wolf."

"And this great rug?"

"The pelt of the buffalo."

"Very well, very well!" commended the merchant.

"Now what do you know about curing these pelts?"

Elan rapidly explained to him the Indian method.

"That is very good, very good indeed!" commended the merchant. "I think you can be very useful to us. Father, the pleasure of serving you in this matter is increased by the knowledge that such service will be quite profitable to me. Monsieur Reville may start in tomorrow morning at eight o'clock. Ho, Monsieur Bientot, come hither!"

From the room in the rear a little old man in an apron, with a padded mallet in his hand, appeared.

"This, Monsieur," said Gabriel, turning to

Elan, "is our foreman. You will report to him tomorrow. Bientot, this young man will join us in your room. He has been telling me of the Indian method of curing skins, and there are some features which we do not practise. It would be well to try them out."

Monsieur Bientot nodded and grinned, and retired to his workroom.

Father Reville and Elan sat a little longer with the head of the house, Elan quiet and listening, while the two old friends exchanged reminiscences.

Thus was the child of the wilderness installed in the house of François Dupont et Fils.

Handling pelts was a familiar occupation and he soon became proficient. From friendship for Father Reville and from interest in Elan's personality, Monsieur Gabriel bestowed a great deal of attention upon him, and in fitting out expeditions for America the merchant found his advice quite valuable.

Meanwhile, Elan, at the suggestion of his friend, left the house of the Jesuits, and rented a small room from a widow whose house was near the office. When not engaged in his work, he wandered about the streets continually, his quick eyes shifting from face to face as he searched in the multitude. He attracted considerable attention

among the townspeople, although he was quite unconscious of it. Notwithstanding his present occupation, his step was the step of the outdoor man, free, sure and strong, and under the workman's blouse which he now wore was a frame whose every line bespoke agility and strength.

The spring and summer went by and the autumn came. One September morning, as he walked vigorously from his quarters to his work, he passed two white-robed Sisters in the street. Behind them, arm in arm and two by two, walked half a dozen young girls. As they passed him the young man stopped and gazed with a quick, searching glance at one of the girls. He recognized instantly the flashing features of Valerie. As he looked at her she lifted her eyes and their glances met. A fleeting, fugitive sense of recollection was mirrored in the girl's eyes and the color came into her cheeks, then she lowered her glance and passed on with her companions.

For a few minutes Elan stood motionless. Then he turned and quietly followed them. They walked to a street on the outskirts of the town and stopped before an iron gate set in a high stone wall. One of the religieuse beat on the door with the ponderous brass knocker. In a minute the postern was opened and the Sisters and their charges disappeared within. Elan noted the loca-

tion of the building, and with quick stride retraced his steps.

The next morning the young man got out of bed before dawn and quickly dressed himself. Hurrying out of the house into the still dark street, he made his way to the walled enclosure. Then as the sky in the east became rosy with the flush of the day, he added to the warbling of the native birds a new note, trilling forth on the fresh air of the fragrant morning the call of the American wood thrush. Thrice he called and at a window, whose upper part just showed above the parapet of the wall, he saw the outlines of a small white hand, and caught the flutter of a lace handkerchief.

CHAPTER XXX

AN INDIAN ON THE WALL

Mother Scholasticus, Superior of the Convent School of Notre Dame de Bordeaux, smiled as she heard a gay, ringing laugh from the dormitory.

"Sister," she said to Sister Mathilde, "is that Valerie laughing?"

"Yes, Mother," replied little Sister Mathilde. "She laughs quite frequently now. The child has quite lost that air of sadness that sat so poorly upon her."

"'Tis well," said the Mother Superior, "I was beginning to fear for her health, although Dr. Mattieu assures me that she is physically sound."

"The humors of young ladies are strange, Mother," said Sister Mathilde, with a little sigh.

Just then the dormitory door opened and the Sisters listened to the gay chatter of the girls.

"You do, Valerie, you do!" cried one voice.

"No, no!" answered Valerie. "I am sure I do not."

"Oh, yes," insisted the voice, "but you do in the early dawn!"

"Let her have her way," chimed in a third voice. "You must not spoil our little romance. Why, we haven't had anything here so perfectly thrilling in months. Just think of it, a beautiful somnambulist."

Again came Valerie's laughing protest.

"But only this morning," insisted the first voice, "you got up just before daybreak!"

"Hush, foolish," said Valerie.

"But you did," the girl insisted, "and the other morning—it is nearly a week ago—I heard you stirring and it awakened me. Then I saw you rise like a white ghost out of your bed and glide to the window, and you raised your hand so high and held it there with your handkerchief fluttering."

A chorus of delighted "Ah's" and "Oh's" greeted this narrative, and one of the girls exclaimed:

"Isn't it splendid? Please don't stop it, Valerie!"

But the two Sisters in the outer room exchanged glances, and a little frown of perplexity wrinkled slightly the gentle brow of the Mother Superior.

"That is rather strange, Sister," she said to Sister Mathilde.

"Quite strange," replied Sister Mathilde.

The Mother Superior reached up and pulled a tasseled cord and the clanging of a bell in the distant court came faintly to them. Within a few minutes old Mathias, the watchman, stood before her, rumpling his cap in his gnarled old hands.

"Mathias," said the Mother, "are the windows of the dormitory visible from the road?"

"From the far side, Mother," answered the old man. "The upper part of the pane is just apparent above the wall."

"Have you noticed anything strange in the road, Mathias, about daybreak?"

"No, Mother, but I could not well do so for I make my last round outside about half an hour before the dawn," he answered.

"H'm!" The Mother Superior laid a thoughtful finger upon her lips. "Mathias," she said at last after a minute of reverie, "tomorrow let your last round be about daybreak, and report to me anything you may see?"

When Valerie awakened before the dawn the following morning, she crept from her bed very softly and, before she went to the window, bent over the figure of the telltale companion of the previous day to assure herself that that young lady was fast asleep. Then with her little lace handkerchief in her hand she hastened to the window. As she did so the wood thrush call rose

on the air outside. Valerie raised her hand high and waved the little patch of lace, she looked out at the high, stone wall behind which she knew Elan must be standing.

Even as she gazed she gave a little start and placed her hand over her heart. A hand had appeared grasping the coping stones of the wall. The girl gently opened the lattice and leaned over the sill. A moccasined foot and a leg in a fringed deerskin leggin were now flung over the parapet, and an instant later Elan in the habiliments of the wilderness, was outlined against the paling east. He had hardly gained an upright position, however, when the voice of old Mathias rose angrily from the street outside. Instantly Elan's body disappeared from her view. An irrepressible scream burst from her, and a few minutes later a score of girls were gathered round a sobbing little figure crouched by the window.

Meanwhile, evidences of excitement elsewhere were audible. The gate bell was pealing in the dormitory of the Sisters, and soon the slippered feet of the good religieuses could be heard pattering on the floor, then the girls heard Mathias' voice, quick and eager with excitement. Half an hour later Valerie was summoned to the office. Mother Scholasticus sat at her desk wearing an unwonted look of severity.

"What is this, my child?" she asked. "Mathias reports that an American Indian made some bird-like signal from the street and that you waved him a signal from your window. He says this Indian was so emboldened that he climbed to the top of our wall."

"Was he hurt, Mother?" Valerie asked.

"No, he was not hurt. When Mathias called to him he clambered quickly down and disappeared before the watch could apprehend him. But what means this, Valerie? How can it be that you are carrying on such a clandestine correspondence with a savage man?"

Valerie hung her head and was silent.

"Come, tell me," the Mother asked again in a more kindly tone. "What is it, my girl? Where did you meet this man?"

Valerie's only answer was to throw herself upon the breast of the Mother Superior and break into a torrent of sobs.

"There, there!" said the Mother, affectionately patting the bent, chestnut head. "There, there! We shall soon get over this folly, but we cannot stay here longer, little lady. Tomorrow we shall go to the house of our Order at Tours. Whatever this is, it must cease."

When Elan appeared at the wall next morning and sounded his bird call, there was no flutter of

white behind the distant window pane, nor on the following morning did the signal answer his. For a week he persevered, then he went no more to the convent of Notre Dame de Bordeaux.

Indeed, his visits would have had to cease in any event, as Monsieur Gabriel had work of a more important character than beating oil out of pelts with padded mallets for his newest employee. It was the day after Elan's last visit to the convent when the young man was summoned to the outer office.

"Be seated, Monsieur Reville," said his employer, indicating a vacant chair in front of the desk. "We must have a little talk together. You know the North American woods. Do you know the country of the St. Lawrence?"

"I know where it is," Elan answered, "although I have never hunted in the woods of the great river. It is, however, a country much like that in which I have hunted."

"Ah, that is well," answered Gabriel. "We have a ship, the *St. Laurent*, which we are equipping for a voyage up the St. Lawrence. Will you take charge of the expedition?"

Elan assented instantly.

For the next few weeks he was busy superintending the equipment of the vessel and early in the fourth week he set sail. The vessel was fast

and the wind favored and within two months they came to anchor before Quebec. Elan, once more in the wilderness, donned the garments to which he was accustomed, and gathering a small band of Indian hunters, set forth on his expedition. It was enormously successful. Soon the holds of the *St. Laurent* were packed with the rich spoil of the woods, and the young chief of the expedition was satisfied to give directions for the homeward voyage.

Monsieur Gabriel himself greeted him at the dock and warmly welcomed him home. The delight of the merchant was greatly increased when he looked over the vessel's manifest and noted the quantity and variety of the skins in her cargo.

"Wonderful, Monsieur Reville!" he cried, slapping Elan on the back. "'Tis the most prosperous voyage we ever had. Now to get the stuff ashore and then after a little while you shall go up for another priceless load, eh, my son?"

But Elan shook his head. "Monsieur is very kind to me," he said, "but I shall not go back to the St. Lawrence country."

"Ah!" Monsieur Gabriel looked at him in surprise. "But Monsieur Reville, you are of little value to me in the curing room but of great value, which I shall pay, in the field, and yet you would stay in the curing room?"

"No, Monsieur," Elan shook his head. "Not in the curing room either, Monsieur Gabriel. I am going to America."

"And where in America?"

"I am going to New Orleans."

"Ah!" Monsieur Gabriel cried thoughtfully, "but perhaps we could make arrangements? Would you be our factor in New Orleans if we should open a house in that city? Could that be done, Monsieur Reville?"

"I would gladly serve you," Elan answered warmly.

Monsieur Gabriel rubbed his hands. "Very well, very well! I shall have to discuss it with my brothers and my father and my grandfather, but in these matters they lean much on my judgment. I think it may be arranged, Monsieur Reville."

CHAPTER XXXI

MY WARRIOR

The August evening light fell brightly on the great square in New Orleans, known as the Place d'Armes, beneath whose bordering shade trees women fluttered in white gowns, little children romped, negro slaves sauntered, chattering and laughing with shining, black faces and flashing white teeth, and citizens in lace cuffs and collars, with long back coats, silken breeches and stockings, and buckled shoes, took the evening air. There was a vivacity, wholly French, in the scene. Gay laughter rang out here and there, sometimes in the shrill laughter of children, sometimes the clear contralto of young women, sometimes the deeper, harsher merriment of men. The fringed deerskin garments of couriers and hunters mingled with the more conventional garb of the city men. An occasional Indian, naked save for breech clout and feathered leggings, stood under a tree, dark, silent, with dull eyes and impassive features.

Down each side of the square ran a low, rectangular building, visible beneath the shade trees.

In front of these buildings soldiers were gathering, with pale blue coats faced in buff and glittering with gilt buttons and braid. They wore triangular hats with white cockades, centered with the lilies of France. Broad, white bandoliers crossed on their breasts and held their knapsacks upon their shoulders. A clear bugle note sang on the air, and the musicians, in scarlet coats, began to form ranks. The sun blazed on their instruments of brass. The eyes of the spectators danced as the long, high roll of the kettle drums, and the clear, piercing music of the fifes struck on their ears. Then came the measured tread of marching men, as the files moved out on the esplanade, the gorgeous band in front, the fifes shrilling, the kettle drums in full rat-a-tat. They were out now in the sun-swept field, long lines of bayonets flashing like serpents of silver, and a cloud of golden fire in advance where the sun broke in a shower of golden reflections upon the polished instruments of the bandsmen. Suddenly these instruments were raised and the crashing music of the brasses blared out. Away down the esplanade swept the battalion. A group of officers with plumed chapeaux and golden epaulettes on their shoulders, had ridden out to the center of the square where they reined their horses gracefully and waited.

Elan Reville noticed the colonel, a laughing soldier, with a slender figure, clear, bold eyes under level brows and a slight mustache above merry lips, who rode like a centaur. Although he did not know it, he himself was an object of interest to the military men.

"You don't mean it, Ribaud," said Colonel de Courcey, as he keenly surveyed the dark and solitary figure on the steps of the church.

"Yes, my colonel, 'tis surely the new factor," Ribaud answered. "I camped with him and hunted with him up the Missouri. He is a brave and gallant fellow."

A quick gleam of pleasure flashed in the eyes of the colonel. "We can't have too many such in our company here," he said. "He does not seem to love the city over well?"

"No," said Lieutenant Ribaud. "He is seldom in town except when there is a ship to load. He spends most of his time in the field."

"Pray, Lieutenant, present my compliments to him and say that Colonel de Courcey will be honored if he will assist him in the review, and join us at dinner this evening."

Lieutenant Ribaud spurred his horse across the field, pausing in front of the church of St. Louis, upon whose steps Elan stood observing the ma-

neuvers. He courteously repeated his superior's invitation.

Elan nodded in assent and followed Ribaud's horse toward the reviewing party. De Courcey galloped forward to meet them, and in front of Elan sprang to the ground. His outstretched hand clasped that of the young factor, and together the two walked back toward the little cluster of mounted officers, de Courcey leading his steed by the bridle.

"So, Monsieur is from Bordeaux?" de Courcey said, after the review and when the officers were seated at mess.

The young man nodded.

"They tell me," said the officer, "that the house of M. Dupont is fortunate in its factor. Hitherto, only the ships of our good friend René de Boncour came to New Orleans for furs, but now they say René is hard put to it to load as big a cargo as that which goes into the Dupont ships."

"Monsieur de Boncour is also of Bordeaux?" said Elan.

"Aye, and he is a good little fellow," de Courcey answered. "Although he has not met you I have heard him speak very well of you. There is no mean jealousy in René, Monsieur."

Elan smiled quietly. "I should be glad to meet M. de Boncour," he said.

"Then, by Jove, you shall," answered de Courcey. "The evening is young, let us do ourselves the honor of calling upon Madame de Boncour and her family."

After the repast de Courcey, Ribaud and Elan walked over to the de Boncour place. René greeted them warmly at the door and shook hands with Elan most graciously.

"Ah, mother," he called, as Madame de Boncour advanced smiling to greet the visitors. "This is the young gentleman from Bordeaux who has kept himself so remote from us. Let him be welcomed, mother, so that he shall not hide himself in the woods."

"You shall have cause to complain no more," said Elan smiling, as he shook hands with Valerie's mother. "If I have permission I shall come often."

"And never too often," Madame de Boncour replied. "We love to hear of Bordeaux. Our little girl was at school there, you know."

Elan did not answer, but René took up the thread of conversation.

"Aye, we sent her there to finish her education with the good Sisters," he said. "A great little girl is our Valerie, Monsieur Réville, and it fills our heart with joy that she so soon is to return to us."

Elan looked up quickly. "Mademoiselle de Boncour is to return soon, then?" he inquired.

"Truly," answered de Boncour. "A month hence she sets sail, coming back in the *Marie Céleste*. God prosper the voyage! Before the winter closes down she should be in our arms."

Thereafter Elan was a frequent visitor at the de Boncour home. In the fur business in which they were engaged the men found a subject of much interest for discussion, and René soon became very fond of the tall young hunter who represented his rivals.

Raoul, who was about Elan's own age, declared him to be a prince of good companions, and Gaspare, now on the verge of young manhood, was devoted to the handsome young hunter who could teach him so much of the ways of the wood. Madame de Boncour, too, had a quick and affectionate heart which soon enveloped Elan.

The days passed quickly until the new year came. On the morning of its feast day an Indian hunter reported to René de Boncour that the *Marie Céleste* was beating her way up the broad river, having entered the delta. That night Elan disappeared.

On board Captain Halevy's good ship, a few mornings later, Valerie de Boncour awoke before

daylight. Her heart was full of the excitement of the home-coming and she hurried on deck to survey the dark but familiar shores. Just as the morning dawned she gave a start and a cry of pleasure. From the dark bank of the eastern shore came clear and high the call of the wood thrush. She tried to pierce the gloom on the river but could see nothing, nor was the helmsman to whom she next appealed able to discover any sign of a living thing in the shadow of the bank. The *Marie Céleste* slowly fought the current, tacking back and forth, and at last came to anchor off the de Boncour levee.

Before the iron hook dropped into the water, de Boncour's barge was alongside, and an instant later Valerie was being embraced by father and mother and delighted brothers. Along the shore were friends of her childhood, all eager to welcome her. Indeed, the day was one of bewildering welcomes and she soon found that the night was to be turned also into a festival of joy for her home-coming.

De Boncour's parlors had been cleared for a ball, which the trader was to give in honor of Valerie's arrival. So after an early tea and a brief nap the girl awoke to find her home crowded with the good citizens of New Orleans and their wives and daughters, among whose gay gar-

ments sparkled the gold epaulettes of the military officers.

Clothed by her loving mother and adoring negro maid, Valerie was a vision of beauty as she entered the ballroom. As the queenly little figure advanced on the arm of Colonel de Courcey, a murmur of admiration arose from the young men. Valerie was smiling shyly but her glance shifted from face to face as if she was seeking somebody. The musicians began to play and the dancers formed in the minuet. As they stepped through its stately, graceful figures the voice of the negro butler was heard in the hall announcing:

“Monsieur Elan Reville!”

A second or two later Elan entered the ballroom. He was clothed in black satin with a huge ruffle of white lace at his throat and at his cuffs. His curly hair drawn back and tied with a ribbon, and powdered, after the fashion of the day, shone white against the deep weather-tan of his countenance.

As Valerie faced the door her glance fell upon him and she stood motionless, her eyes wide and the color in her cheeks coming and going. He advanced a step into the room and held out his hands.

As if drawn by a power invisible and irresistible, the girl moved toward him. The dancers paused

in surprise, de Courcey turning with a look of swift and searching inquiry toward the newcomer. The music ended raggedly, a surprised violinist stopping with his bow half drawn, and a harper dropping his hand from the still vibrating string. Valerie's cheeks glowed and gleamed, now the color of the royal rose, now the hue of the delicate lily. The lace at her bosom rose and fell. Her wide eyes were startled, incredulous, glowing with a great hope that fought with unbelief. She searched his face, examining each feature. He stood, smiling a little, his hands toward her.

"Speak!"

Her tone was tense, eager; her word a command and an entreaty.

His voice, deep and clear, answered her:

"Humming Bird!"

The unbelief in her eyes died; the hope blazed high.

"You—you are——?" The tremulous voice broke.

"Elan," he answered.

Her arms went out and she swayed toward him. Like a golden peal of pure joy her voice rang:

"My Warrior!"



"You—you are——? . . . My Warrior"

CHAPTER XXXII

EYES THAT LOOKED BACK

The great reception hall of the Popes, the splendid *sala regia*, with its pontifical throne and its priceless tapestries, seemed vast and lonely, although it was by no means untenanted. It took the throngs who attended the state audiences to fill that magnificent corridor; the few who now crossed its floor seemed lost in it. They were pilgrims going to or coming from the great Vatican Chapels in front of whose vestibules, guarding the Sistine on one hand and the Pauline on the other, stood two huge Swiss in the ancient uniform Michael Angelo had designed for their corps. Noble guards in black velvet ceremoniously saluted the Swiss as they passed. Black-robed ecclesiastics on business bent, went back and forth. A Cardinal in his red garments stepped from the vestibule of the Pauline chapel, and then paused with a smile of greeting, as an aged priest approached him.

"Ah, Father Reville," he said, "how prospers the right arm of the faith? Can the Holy Father be of help to the brethren of Ignatius?"

"No, I came not to the Vatican on business of the Society, Monsignor," answered Father Reville. "I am on my way to the library, where I have been transcribing some of the parchments of the *Liber Pontificalis*."

"Soldier and student by turns, but always Saint!" the Cardinal said graciously. "Well, I am for the closet of his Holiness, so in God's keeping I leave you, Father."

With a smile the old man thanked him and he made his way toward the great staircase.

Father Reville was slightly more bent and a few more fine lines wrinkled his countenance. His black cassock hung loosely on his spare frame. It was the same simple robe he had ever worn, for no insignia marks the General of the Jesuits. His step was a trifle hesitant but his eyes were undimmed. As the day was warm he held his biretta in his hand, leaving uncovered the tonsured crown and the white hair that fell to his shoulders.

With the slightly hesitant step he walked down the *sala regia* or vast staircase that endured to tell the world that once there lived and dreamed a genius called Bernini. Crossing the court with its magnificent triple colonnade, he made his way to the long library gallery. All who passed him gazed with affection at the old man; some stopped him to ask his benediction. He paused at an al-

cove, barred by a gate at one end and lighted by a rose window at the other. Opening the gate he entered this nook. There was a reading table under the window, and a chair. The enclosing partitions were shelved, and each shelf held a roll of age-yellow parchment. Carefully selecting one of these, Father Reville had it placed on the table by an attendant. Bowing his thanks to the man, the priest laid a writing tablet beside the parchment, wiped a pair of spectacles, and, placing these on the bridge of his nose, seated himself. The Latin text on the vellum scroll was faded and dim. It was lettered in the beautifully executed characters of the ancient monastic engrossing, but many of the words had almost vanished and some were altogether lost. With a goose quill, dipped frequently in the inkhorn on his table, Father Reville laboriously transcribed the record on his writing pad.

“Alexander III, presently and for some short time, held possession of a crystal rood,” the ancient narrative ran. “It was a gift to him while yet he was Archbishop of Siena from the jewel-workers’ craft of that See. His Holiness, although austere in his tastes, and little given to adornments, prized this crystal highly. The tree of the cross was but of the length of a finger, still the crystal was of great luster and the carving was

most cunningly executed. The features of the Christ were nobly made, His Divine and cruelly lacerated figure hung from the Transverse, eloquent of his sacrifice, as"—here the words were missing from the parchment—"the skill of a master craftsman. One blemish only the crystal had, yet, so strange are the ways of God, it added to the effect of the craftsman's work, although it seemed as if he did not so intend. Near where the nail pierced the sacred feet, a dull, reddish blemish marred the transparent shaft. It passed through the feet, and the pillar, a straight spear, which looked like unto the rust of the nail. But when one closely looked it was plain that this was accidental and not the design of the craftsman, for the carved head of the nail was not truly placed on the blemish but a little to the side. This wonderful jewel was bestowed by Alexander upon one Philip of Exeter, a knight of Syria, serving in the train of Baldwin, of Jerusalem, the King, as a reward for a deed of high daring and chivalry, whom his Holiness in the bestowal dubbed the bravest of the brave, and thus blessed him and his house."

(Then followed the blessing Alexander had bestowed on the young soldier.)

"The crystal rood!" he murmured. "A finger's length—yes, it would measure so. And the strange blemish, the blood mark, or rust mark!

Ah, what was it the good ship captain said of that plunge into the black, tempest-tortured deep? Ah, yes; 'bravest of the brave.' And Alexander dubbed him 'bravest of the brave.' "

The old priest passed a hand over his eyes. The vision of shelved walls, of reading table, and the age-yellow parchment dimly marked with Latin letters, glowing under the colored light that sifted in through the rose window—this was shut out. Another scene flashed before him—the ragged rip of lightning across the storm, the wild blackness in which white ghostly crests reared themselves, the raging desolation, the dark hand stretched forth to save. Then the vision changed; there came the radiant night of stars, the following dawn, the glowing day, and the revelation of a strong, clear, confident face, dominant over all else.

"Aye, 'bravest of the brave,' " repeated the Jesuit, as he let his hand drop from his eyes. "Truly, the ways of God are wonderful!"

His glance rested on the parchment.

" 'Though the generations be a score or a hundred.' Surely, it is as thou didst say, splendid Alexander. Surely in thy blessing was the might of God. For behold, 'tis not alone benediction but prophecy that marks this parchment! 'Upon thee be the blessing of our Father, the Almighty

God, and his Son, the gentle and brave Christ, our Saviour, and the Holy Ghost, who commissioned us through the Sainted Peter; upon thee, bravest of the brave, and thy son and thy son's son, forever!" "

THE END

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